The world of film animation and comic art

Funnyworld

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The Filming of 'Fritz the Cat'
The Life of Ub Iwerks
Color Comics by Richard Corben

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The contents of this issue are considerably different from what I predicted in FUNNYWORLD No. 13, and this issue is appearing a great deal later than advertisements for it would have led most reader to expect. Both developments have been caused largely by "The Filming of "Fritz the Cat'," which insisted on becoming much longer and more detailed than I had planned. In fact, this issue wasn't large enough to hold all of the article on "Fritz," and so the second half will appear in FUNNYWORLD No. 15. The time between No. 14 and No. 15 should be much less than that between No. 13 and No. 14.

The principal item missing from this issue is the second half of the interview with Bob Clampett; that is now scheduled for FUNNYWORLD No. 16. Bob Clampett asked that the second half of his interview be delayed so that there would be room in this issue for David R. Smith's biography of Ub Iwerks. The feature on cartoon voices and Fred Patten's piece on French "funny animals" will also appear in future issues.

THIS IS THE first issue of FUNNYWORLD that contains comics by someone other than me. My "Fearless Fang" has been retired until my drawing improves; the rest of FUNNYWORLD has gotten so professional that it makes "Fang" look even more amateurish than it really is.

No one could call Richard Corben's "Going Home" amateurish, and if all goes according to plan, many strips of similar quality will be appearing in FUNNYWORLD in the future. (The next issue will have a thirteen-page story by John Fawcett.) These comic strips will permit FUNNYWORLD to appear more frequently—much more frequently, I hope. In case you've wondered, the reason for the long delays between the issues of FUNNYWORLD is not finances—it's simply that I have had to do most of the writing for each issue

myself, and it's in my nature to linger over any writing job longer than I should. Fortunately, some capable writers are coming forward now with material for FUNNYWORLD, and so are good comics artists (FUNNYWORLD will soon be paying for comics pages at rates comparable to those of the underground comics publishers).

A MONUMENTAL "Who's Who" of comic-book artists and writers is being compiled by Hames Ware and Jerry Bails, and they are trying to get in touch with every living comic-book professional, past and present. Professionals in the field who have not been reached—and fans who want to know more about this project—should write to Bails (487 Lakewood, Detroit, Michigan 48215). Professionals should ask for a biographical form; fans should enclose a stamped, self-addressed envelope.

ERRATA: The last issue of FUNNYWORLD contained a few errors that should be corrected.

The SLOW DEATH comic book is published by Last Gasp Eco-Funnies, not Rip Off Press.

A footnote in the Carl Stalling interview stated that "Walt Disney himself did Mickey Mouse's voice most of the time up until the middle 1930s, when Jim MacDonald, a veteran sound effects man at the studio, began doing it." Jim Macdonald (into whose name I inserted a capitalized "D") says he began doing Mickey's voice around the fall of 1946, starting with the "Mickey and the Beanstalk" segment of "Fun and Fancy Free," which was released in the fall of 1947.

In the listing of early Disney cartoons that accompanied the Stalling interview, a couple of titles were misspelled; the correct titles are "The Opry House" and "The Karnival Kid."

Finally, a caricature of Carl Stalling was identified as having been drawn by Mike Maltese, who was a Warner story man for more than twenty years. Mike Maltese says that's wrong, and the caricature is actually by Chuck Jones. Mike Maltese should have been mentioned elsewhere in FUNNYWORLD No. 13, since much of that issue was devoted to Chuck Jones and his cartoons, and Maltese was Jones' story man for a period running from the middle Forties until the late Fifties—the time when Jones was making his best cartoons for Warner's. Jones has credited Maltese as the co-creator of the Road Runner and the Coyote, and Maltese also originated the idea for Pepe le Pew. What Jones did with Maltese's stories was usually more important than the stories themselves, but there is no reason to doubt that the Jones cartoons would have been significantly different without Maltese.

PUBLICATIONS: A three-volume REFERENCE GUIDE TO FANTASTIC FILMS (including animated cartoons) is being compiled by Walt Lee, P.O. Box 66273, Los Angeles, California 90066. Volume I is scheduled for publication in August 1972. Information about the project is available for a stamped, self-addressed envelope from Lee at the above address.

CARTOON (four dollars for four issues from Jim Ivey, 561 Obispo Avenue, Orlando, Florida 32807) has been described accurately as a "scrapbook," but it's a fascinating and appealing scrapbook, containing a lot of material—especially about early comic strips—that simply isn't available anywhere else.

GRAPHIC STORY WORLD (fifty cents per copy from Richard Kyle, P.O. Box 16168, Long Beach, California 90806) is a superb bi-monthly magazine that covers with more immediacy than FUNNYWORLD many of the subjects that FUNNYWORLD's readers find of interest—animation, underground comic books, foreign comics, etc.

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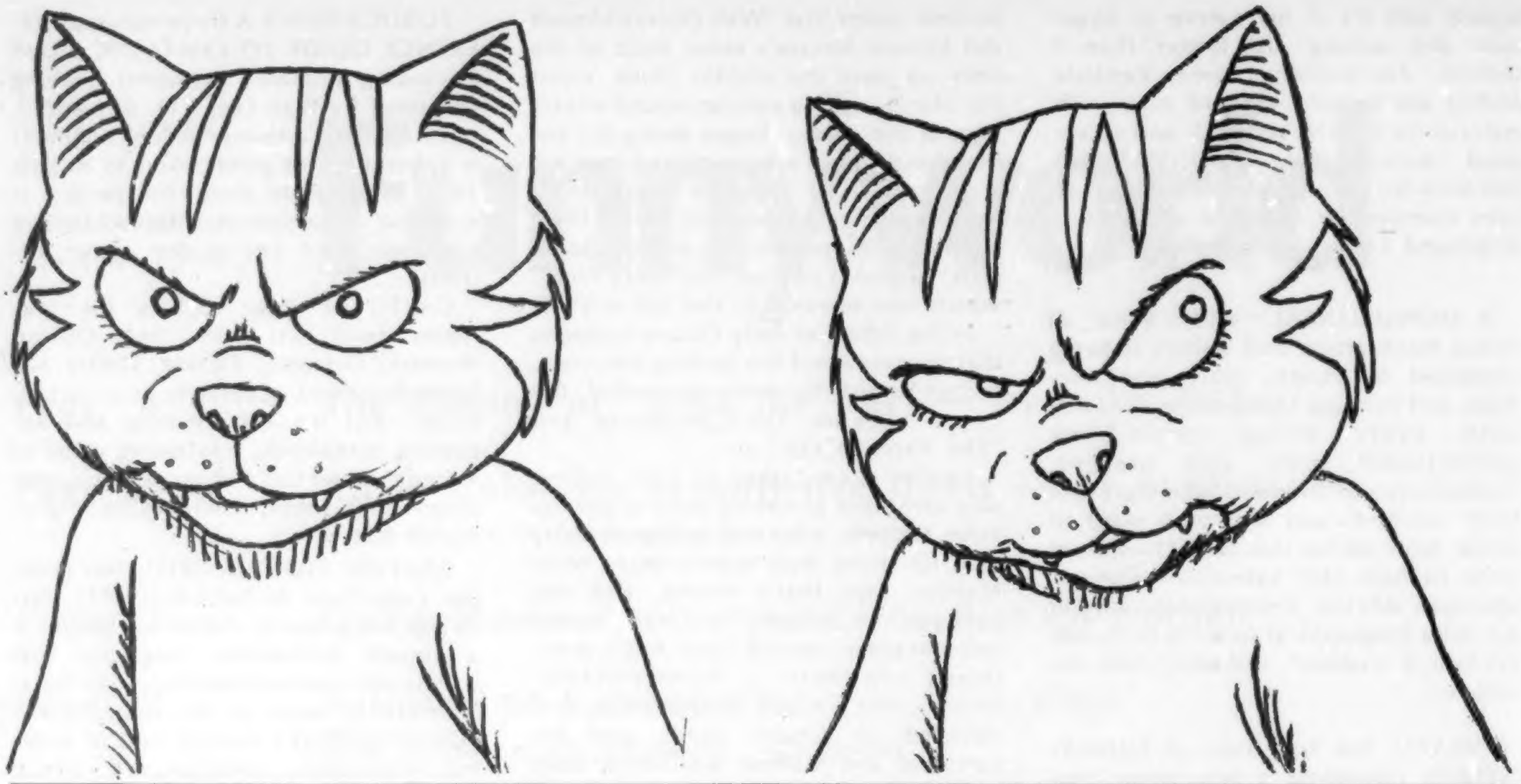
—MIKE BARRIER

This quick sketch by Ralph Bakshi, the director of "Fritz the Cat," bears a strong resemblance to some of Robert Crumb's drawings, and that's appropriate, since the sketch was drawn Crumb-fashion. Like Crumb, Bakshi worked directly in ink, without first sketching in pencil. (Another Bakshi sketch—this one drawn with the help of preliminary penciling—appears on Page 11, and a Bakshi painting is reproduced on the back cover of this issue.) Bakshi's connection with Crumb runs much deeper than his adoption of Crumb's drawing methods, of course, since it was Crumb's stories about Fritz the Cat that were the starting point for Bakshi's movie about that character. The story of the filming of "Fritz" begins on the next page.



The Filming of "Fritz the Cat"

By MIKE BARRIER

I. Bucking the Tide

When I spoke to Ralph Bakshi, the young director of "Fritz the Cat," a couple of days after the picture had been previewed in Los Angeles, he was still jubilant over the audience's response. "Everyone makes the turn," he said. "They forget it's animation. They treat it like a film. This means we can make 'War and Peace' in animation. This is the real thing, to get people to take animation seriously."

A few days later, after a February 15 showing at the Museum of Modern Art in New York, with Bakshi there to field questions from the audience, he reported the same sort of reaction, but with a difference: "Some guy asked me why I was against the revolution. The point is, animation was making people get up off their asses and get mad."

Bakshi's words may provoke discomfort in people who are familiar with animation's recent history. Other cartoon-makers have tried to make audiences forget that they were watching animated films, and that usually has meant that the cartoon-makers forgot they were **making** animated films. They have tried to hide animation behind a bush, or else make it indistinguishable from live action. "Fritz" was not made with that in mind. What Bakshi tried to do was to make an animated feature that was both "serious" and blatantly, unashamedly **animated**. "Fritz the Cat," which is based on several comic-strip stories by Robert Crumb, the most widely admired of the underground cartoonists, is full of blood, sex, urine, radical politics and four-letter words. Bakshi's professed intention was to marry this fearsome subject matter to traditional, mainstream animation—that is, animation that makes the impossible seem solid and real.

He was remarkably successful, especially considering the odds against him. "Fritz" is a messy and imperfect picture, and it bears the scars of its difficult birth, but it has the energy of a good idea behind it, and that is enough for it to be outstanding at a time when most animated cartoons are made out of habit, or for a quick buck. "Fritz" is like a beautiful butterfly that has just begun to emerge from its cocoon. It's easy to see the cocoon—the mistakes, the miscalculations, the compromises Bakshi had to make because he didn't have the money or the people he needed—but with only a little effort, you can see the butterfly: the movie that "Fritz" might have been if it had been made under happier circumstances. There is no point in mourning the loss of a more nearly perfect "Fritz," just as there is no point in regretting the clumsy animation in parts of "Snow White"; both films were necessary stepping stones for the people who made them. If Ralph Bakshi builds on his strengths as a director, he will make animated cartoons that leave "Fritz" far behind, but even if he fails to grasp this opportunity, he still will have opened doors for animation as no one has since Walt Disney. That is quite an achievement.

Some critics of "Fritz"—including Robert Crumb—see mostly the cocoon. Crumb says now that he never wanted the picture made, and he didn't like "Fritz" when he saw it late in February; it has a morbid, disturbed mood, he says, and doesn't bear much resemblance to his stories. Some other cartoonists haven't liked it either, and one has condemned what he called its straightforward, live-action approach to all its off-color activities. "I think

animation is weak when it tries too hard to do the things live action does better," he said, "and 'Fritz' really is a live-action script. It is only incidental that Fritz is a talking animal and that the film was made as an animated cartoon."

The irony in such criticism is thick, because Bakshi has proclaimed repeatedly his desire to get away from animation that walks in live action's shadow. "I don't think realistic [i.e., realistically **drawn**] characters have any business in animation, at all, ever, never again, please," he told me last spring in Hollywood, not long after his animation studio had moved west from New York City. But, he added, "Characters die in this picture; they do get shot. To get that kind of believability, I had to go back to a solid form—solid construction, solid motion. Also, I wanted to relate directly to what characters like Porky Pig and Bugs Bunny used to do in old cartoons, so that the audiences would understand what could have been done even in those cartoons, and what we're doing now."

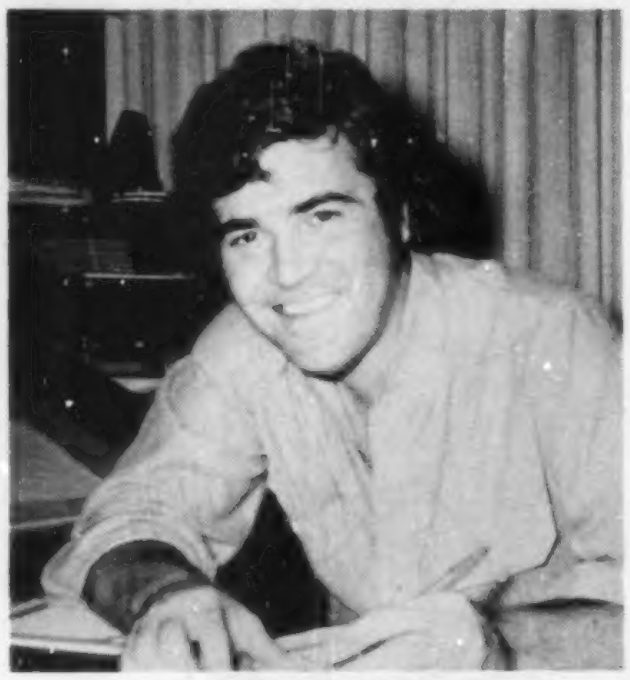
At first glance, there might seem to be some conflict between such statements and another that Bakshi made last fall. "My approach to animation as a director is live action," he said. "I don't approach it in the traditional animation ways. None of our characters get up and sing, because that's not the type of picture I'm trying to do. I want people to believe my characters are real, and it's hard to believe they're real if they start walking down the street singing."

How can a director reject "realistic" animation and yet espouse a "live-action" approach to animation? The two goals are not really contradictory. What Bakshi wants to abandon is animation that tries to match the **appearance** of live action (Disney features such as "Lady and the Tramp" and "Sleeping Beauty" are good examples) in favor of animation that conveys the **substance** of the best live-action films—in other words, the emotional depth that has been largely absent from animation for the last fifteen or twenty years.

There's not any novelty in making films that are both "real" and animated. The people who made the best short cartoons in the Thirties and Forties filled them with sex, violence, racial caricatures, and other volatile ingredients, but they came at such subjects from oblique angles, in keeping with the taboos of the day. This means that Bakshi's task was actually quite different from theirs; he tried to put together a film that was both **explicit** and animated, using good animation to break through the psychological bonds that have kept cartoons languishing in the ghetto of children's television.

Bakshi says that he constructed "Fritz" to lure the audience in, starting funny (and so establishing his links with the old cartoons even more strongly) and then killing one of his most sympathetic characters in a Harlem race riot and leaving him lying in the street. His story turns more somber then, but the animation itself does not. The question has always been, will audiences accept this? Can they make the turn?

The answer is yes, as the picture's boxoffice success testifies. There is a disquieting undercurrent in this success, however, and it takes the form of another question: is "Fritz" really awakening audiences to what animation can do, or are they attracted to "Fritz" because it is a novelty, with its cartoon animals living hard and talking dirty?



RALPH BAKSHI

The real test of "Fritz's" impact will come when Ralph Bakshi directs more animated features. Thanks to "Fritz," Bakshi will now have enough time and money to make features that will be a better measure of his talents than "Fritz" was. These new Bakshi features will go before audiences that have become accustomed to sex and blood and politics in animation. If Bakshi lives up to the promise he shows in "Fritz," the test will be clearcut, and we will learn if audiences really will accept long cartoons that ignore the restrictions of the Disney formula.

"Fritz" is not the limit of Bakshi's ambitions, and he makes no claim that it's a great piece of animation, as animation ("Disney it ain't"). It couldn't have been. "Fritz" was hobbled to some extent by Bakshi's own inexperience in making animated features, but more important, the movie suffered in some way from all the diseases that afflict animation in the 1970s. To follow the film's tribulations is to realize how much blood has been squeezed out of animation since World War II, on the one hand by people who have tried to "elevate" it and on the other by people who want only to make money from it.

There are two paths to animation of a more "elevated" kind. One is the route taken by the Disney studio, where the refinement of animation has meant the development of a stifling house style. Live action has been imitated, rather than transcended. There have been brave attempts in recent years to break out of this trap, but at best they have summoned up memories of earlier and better days. Considered simply as animators, the Disney men remain unexcelled, but to paraphrase what was once said about a Toscanini performance of a musical trifle, watching a new Disney cartoon now is like watching superb chefs prepare hot dogs.

Of course, there is no shortage of cartoon-makers who are willing to attempt animation of the "serious" themes that the Disney studio avoids, but most of these people seem to be ashamed of animation itself. Animation is probably not by nature "serious"; an animated drawing must, in fact, be animated, it must **move**, or it is simply a drawing. The great short cartoons of the Thirties and Forties, from the Disney and Warner and MGM studios, were nothing if not animated, and this seems to have served as a constant embarrassment to many of the artists who have been making cartoon films during the last two or three decades. For example, the program for a recent showing of animated shorts at the Whitney Museum in New York said that "unlike the traditional 'cartoons' made for mass audience appeal—and usually comic effect—these films are more an intimate view of the filmmaker's inner dreams, fantasies and nightmares."

To avoid having their pictures lumped with all those cartoons with talking ducks and mice and rabbits, such filmmakers have often treated animation like a poor relation, shoving it behind handsome designs, drowning it in color, and smothering it with themes that invite movement the way the appearance of the undertaker invites mirth. Some of these films, like those made by UPA in the years immediately following World War II, are appealing on their own terms, and the animation in some "art" films—John Hubley's especially—is excellent, but that seems incidental to the cartoon-makers themselves. Central to animation is the movement of three-dimensional figures—human, humanoid, animal—and to the extent that animated films disregard that fact, they must be counted failures. This does not mean that all animated cartoons must be in a single style, but only that they must proceed from the same starting point, even if their destinations are radically different. Regrettably, most animated films start nowhere and go nowhere.

Limited animation—the simplified, stripped-down movement that has become standard in most non-Disney animation since World War II—has been an integral part of this movement

to upgrade animation, since it stands in contrast to the smooth, natural movement ("full animation") of earlier cartoons. This is the ground where the "serious" cartoon-maker and the avaricious television producer meet. Some television producers even mouth the line of "serious" cartoon-makers, touting their bare-bones animation as an advance over the vastly superior work animators were doing twenty or thirty years ago.

In one sense, the TV men have won their point, since television, with its indiscriminate appetite, treats the old cartoons as if they were the same as the made-for-TV product; cartoons of both kinds are sandwiched routinely between commercials for pre-sweetened cereals and talking dolls. The television audience no longer seems to notice the difference, either.

The difference is there, and it's not hard to measure; it shows up in how cartoon producers spend their money. All television budgets are low, at least by Disney standards, but budgets have been low for many theatrical cartoons of the past, too. Sometimes a budget (or other circumstances) can put a straitjacket on a cartoon producer, but often, within the limits of his budget, a producer has a choice: he can give the bulk of his expenditures to the stories and the animation for his cartoons, or he can stress the technical side of the operation—everything that determines how polished the picture looks on the screen. The TV producers have chosen slickness; they have reduced the stories and animation for their cartoons to formulas, and they rely upon their technical people to salvage rushed, hacked-out drawings. The demands of television (and its moronic executives) may have made this inevitable, but the contrast with many theatrical short subjects of the past—especially the old Warner cartoons—is striking. In them, it's the "production values" that are sloppy; the cartoons often lack a smooth surface, but the money was going where it really mattered, and there is so much vitality and inventiveness in the best of these cartoons that the technical errors simply aren't important.

Economic factors (the rise of the double feature, the general decline in movie attendance) killed short subjects like the old Warner cartoons, and left the theaters open only to cartoon features and the occasional animated "art" film. Television cartoons have filled the void left by the closing of the theatrical cartoon studios, and the TV studios are filled now with veterans of the Disney, Warner, MGM and Lantz studios, but the work they must do is mechanical and demoralizing—especially since television's cruel economics provide work for most of them for only half the year.

There is, then, this great cleavage in animation, between the handful of cartoon-makers who are still "advancing the art," in however misguided a fashion, and the great mass of animation craftsmen, who have little choice but to pursue careers as mechanics rather than artists.

More is involved than any dispute over the merits of full animation versus limited animation. The cry for

"full animation" has become a shibboleth in recent years, because most animation is limited, and most limited animation is bad, but full animation can be good or bad according to how it is used. As a number of recent television commercials and specials and an occasional feature ("The Phantom Tollboth," for example) have demonstrated, it is possible to have full animation that is not especially good animation.

What has been achingly absent from animation is not so much full animation as convincing movement—not movement for its own sake, but movement that defines character, clarifies motives and reveals emotions in ways that live action cannot. Animators are actors with pencils, but even in full animation in recent years there has been a lot of reading of lines, and very little acting. Characters may move, in a rough approximation of live action, but there is little in their movements to distinguish one character from another. This is a disease often thought peculiar to cartoons from television studios like Hanna-Barbera, but its corrupting influence is present in much of today's full animation as well. Directors will sometimes try to plug this hole with visual fireworks, toying with color and shape and line in emulation of "Yellow Submarine." Usually, sitting through this stuff is like watching an elaborately decorated stage on which no play is being performed.

There have been a few exceptions to this general rot; portions of "The Aristocats" and "The Phantom Tollbooth" come first to mind. But there have not been many of them, and even the exceptions are only echoes of what used to be commonplace in the work of the great directors and animators. Many of these directors and animators have grown rusty because their skills have not been put to use; others have lapsed into apathy and cynicism. What is being lost is a sense of animation's possibilities and the pleasures that only animation can offer.

Fritz" represents an effort to turn animation around, at a time when almost all the currents are running in the opposite directions; even the Disney features—which at their best have combined a high degree of polish with beautiful animation—have taken on a rough-hewn look in the last five years, and the budget for the next Disney feature, "Robin Hood," was ordered reduced despite the studio's prosperity. This is a terrible time to be devising an alternative to the Disney style, the posturings of the "art" films and the emptiness of the television cartoons, especially with a story as raw as that of "Fritz." For "Fritz," good animation was needed not merely to make the story believable, but to reduce its sensational nature. This was a tremendous challenge to put before animators at a time when men who once could make a pencil line dance no longer have any greater ambition than to retire.

"Fritz" suffered other difficulties, some so large that Bakshi admits that at some points, "I thought it was all over."

Bakshi and his producer, Steve Krantz, had difficulty from the first in finding financing and distribution for "Fritz." "There has never been a project that was received with less enthusiasm," Krantz recalls. "Animation is essentially a dirty word for distributors, who think that only Disney can paint a tree, and in addition to that, 'Fritz' was so far out that there was a failure to understand that we were onto something very important."

Krantz is correct about the film industry's attitude toward animation. Hollywood has traditionally regarded animation with contempt, and the

The drawings of Fritz that accompany this article are actual animation drawings by John Sparey, who was the principal animator for the character in Hollywood. All drawings are copyright by Steve Krantz Productions.

animation departments of large studios have always been in danger of extinction, regardless of how well they were doing. The story goes that when Jack Warner closed his animation department in 1962, it was the only part of the studio that was making a profit, thanks mostly to the Bugs Bunny television show. Animated cartoons are money in the bank, because they can be reissued and rebroadcast almost without limit, but they have the look of luxury about them, and a new management can make a great show of cost-saving by shutting its cartoon department; that happened to Chuck Jones' MGM unit in 1969.

Even when money was finally found for "Fritz," there still wasn't very much of it. The film was made on a budget of less than a million dollars; that means that "Fritz," which is a little less than eighty minutes long, was made on a budget that compares unfavorably, on a per-minute basis, with the budgets for the better animated television commercials, which cost fourteen or fifteen thousand dollars per minute.

It is possible to produce animated features on a small budget; Filmation, which has concentrated on television cartoons to date, has made an agreement with Warner Brothers to turn out a whole series of feature cartoons budgeted at about a million dollars apiece. However, these features will almost certainly have the same soulless, mechanized look as Filmation's television programs, which are produced on budgets much smaller (on a minute-to-minute comparison) than the new features. For Filmation to produce features in something resembling full animation will require only stirring a little more motion into a limited-animation stew.

But if good animation is desired, rather than animation that is merely "professional," then a budget of less than a million dollars leaves precious little room for mistakes, or for the kind of improvisation that can lift a scene out of the ordinary (and also run its costs up).

Bakshi tackled the cost problem from both ends of production. He saved money "up front"—that is, in the stages before the picture actually went into animation—by serving as his own story man, and by taking on other jobs that are usually filled by someone other than the director himself. "I run a one-man operation," he said last fall. "Everything coming from the studio comes from the talented people backing me up, but all the thinking is mine, as far as color, characters, timing, design—the whole schmear—is concerned."

Bakshi took risks by saving money at the other end, on the technical side of production, thus abandoning any effort to give his movie the smooth, seamless look of many other cartoons. For example, animation studios employ checkers, who make sure that everything fits together the way it should: characters must match backgrounds, the celluloid sheets ("cels") on which characters are inked and painted must be the right size, and so forth. Checking for "Fritz" was so skimpy that at one point, the cameramen discovered that the cels for a desert scene were not wide enough; the edges of the cels would be visible on the screen. A cactus was hastily painted to cover the edges of the cels. In other cases as well, members of the technical crew went beyond the call of duty.

The result was that Bakshi could spend more of his budget on the animation of the picture than he could have if he had followed the normal procedures. Moreover, Bakshi prides himself on his ability to get good results on low budgets, by bearing down on the animation in the crucial scenes: "This is my schtick, trying to get animation where it counts, and where it doesn't count, forget it."

Even with his emphasis on the animation at the expense of the picture's surface gloss, there wasn't enough money to permit the "personality animation" that Bakshi apparently wanted. Animators work under what is called the footage system; most studios require animators to produce enough animation each week to fill a specified number of feet of 35mm. film (which passes through the projector at the rate of ninety feet a minute). For obvious reasons, the quality of the animation varies pretty much according to the footage required. Many television studios require one hundred to one hundred twenty-five feet every week, and at the other extreme, the Disney studio had no footage requirements for many years (although fifteen feet a week is being asked for "Robin Hood"). The requirements at the Krantz studio in Hollywood ran around twenty to twenty-five feet a week, and Bakshi says that the amount of animation actually produced averaged less than that; but even a twenty-foot requirement is high if the aim is to get under the characters' skins and make them come alive.

"Personality animation" is simply acting of a high order, and the great animators at the Disney studio, with no quota to meet, could depict cartoon characters with a depth of understanding that is beyond the reach of most other animators. Brer Bear and Brer Fox in "Song of the South" are good examples; both characters are beautifully realized with personalities that are at once complex and easily grasped, but they are **funny** only because of the expert way they are played against one another. In the cartoons of other studios, such characters could only have been broad caricatures. A great director—a man like Chuck Jones, Bob Clampett, Tex Avery, or the late Frank Tashlin—can impose his own personality on a cartoon, and pull its elements together so that it is more than the sum of its parts. This is why the directors' personalities are dominant in the Warner cartoons, whereas in the Disney features, it is the work of the individual animators that catches the eye—in "Pinocchio," for example, it is easy to distinguish Ward Kimball's Jiminy Cricket, Fred Moore's Lampwick and Bill Tytla's Stromboli. A director like Chuck Jones, who contributes many drawings to a cartoon himself, can achieve subtlety in delineating personality even while working within footage requirements that are high by Disney standards, but Ralph Bakshi doesn't work that way, and so comparable results necessarily remained elusive.

Moreover, Bakshi's budget problems were such that in important respects, he had to compromise on the quality of the animation he was getting even within the bounds set by his footage requirements. "Fritz" was made almost entirely without pencil tests ("We pencil tested I'd say a thousand feet, tops," Bakshi says). A pencil test involves photographing the penciled animation drawings before they are inked (or Xeroxed) onto cels and painted; that way, the director and the animator can check their timing and how well the animation works, and then make any changes that seem necessary. If there are no pencil tests, and no one really knows what the animation looks like until it has been inked and painted and photographed against the background paintings, then the director is flying blind. One member of the "Fritz" staff in New York says that was "a little scary

even for seasoned animators," and Bakshi says that doing the picture without pencil tests seems like "insanity" in retrospect: "We do a major feature without pencil tests—that's tough. The timing falls off. I can always tell an animator to draw it better, and I know if the attitude of the characters is right, but the timing you really can't see." Bakshi had to judge the timing of the animation simply by flipping an animator's drawings in his hand, until he could see the completed animation on the screen.

In one sense, it was natural for Bakshi to plunge into a feature cartoon without the money for pencil tests; the studios he had worked for in New York never made pencil tests (they never made feature-length cartoons, either), and pencil tests would have been superfluous, given the low quality of most of their animation. Pencil tests might have been superfluous for Bakshi, too, since he couldn't afford to spend much money on having animation done over, except for crucial scenes. About all he could do was to give his animators low footage requirements and then rely on their skills—a risky business these days. The risk was compounded when the Bakshi-Krantz studio moved from New York to California in the middle of production, and Bakshi had to work with animators whose skills were unknown quantities.

Problems like these have to do with what happened in the studio itself, but "Fritz" has also had its enemies in the outside world. In California, especially, some other cartoon studios have tried to use "Fritz" to prove that their own skirts are clean. One executive of the Hanna-Barbera studio was quoted in the WALL STREET JOURNAL as saying, "It's unfortunate that the industry has to resort to that kind of picture-making to survive. I hope I never have to be involved in any part of it." (One of Bakshi's animators sent a note to the executive saying, "Word for word, that's exactly how I feel about Hanna-Barbera.")

"Fritz" may have suffered a little from such bad-mouthing, but it seems just as likely that this pious fakery has increased interest in the picture. There is a greater danger, and that is that "Fritz's" impact will be diluted by an outpouring of cartoons that are authentically pornographic, as "Fritz" is not.

Pornographic cartoons are not new, although their public exhibition is. "Buried Treasure," a 1928 cartoon about the unsuccessful efforts of a character named "Eveready Hardon" (or "Harton") to relieve his sexual tensions, was circulated surreptitiously for years; more recently, all or part of this short cartoon has been included in virtually every "blue movie" anthology, beginning with "History of the Blue Movie." "Buried Treasure" has been shown by itself in San Francisco, with music and sound effects added.

Other pornographic cartoons—most of them crude and amateurish—have turned up in the last few years, some of them originating in Europe. None of these cartoons seem to have received wide exposure, but a short cartoon called "Little Annie Fanny"—flagrantly plagiarized from the Harvey Kurtzman comic strip in PLAYBOY—was shown in a New York theater last fall. In April, just three days before "Fritz" opened in New York City, a Japanese-made animated feature, "Cleopatra," began its run at two Manhattan theaters, billed as

an X-rated cartoon in an obvious effort to steal some of "Fritz's" thunder. In fact, "Cleopatra" had not been submitted to the Motion Picture Association for a rating, and it is highly unlikely that it would have received an X if it had been; one critic described it as "kid stuff with naked breasts."

While "Fritz" was still in production, though, rumors began to circulate about pornographic feature cartoons that would follow it into the theaters, and it would be surprising if that did not happen.

The novelty of sex in animation is sure to be short-lived (SCREW, a New York sex paper, gave "Fritz" a low rating even before the picture opened there), and Bakshi seems to have been aware of the danger to his future cartoons if his "Fritz" should become regarded as merely a fad item. Bakshi has talked about the picture as "a documentary on the Sixties," and has soft-pedaled the sex angle. (When "Fritz" was introduced at an April showing at the University of Southern California as the first pornographic cartoon, Bakshi said firmly, " 'Fritz the Cat' is **not** pornographic.") He has, instead, contrasted the supposed realism of "Fritz" with the supposed unrealism of earlier animation. He was quoted last year in the Los Angeles TIMES as saying that the idea of "grown men sitting in cubicles drawing butterflies floating over a field of flowers, while American planes are dropping bombs in Vietnam and kids are marching in the streets, is ludicrous." Advertisements for the picture have played up the sex angle ("90 minutes of violence, excitement and SEX . . . he's X rated and animated!"), but Bakshi blames the distributor for that, and he said in April, "We almost didn't deliver the picture, because of the exploitation of it."

In fact, the explicit sex in "Fritz" is outweighed by its political content; Bakshi himself calls "Fritz" "a political film." "Social relevance" of this sort can easily become a crutch, since there are audiences who will forgive what is shallow and crude, so long as it greases their prejudices. Underground comic books and rock music have provided many examples of this, and "Fritz" draws heavily on both. The temptations must have been great, and Bakshi was seduced by his gaudy story line more than once. Parts of "Fritz" are crayon-crude. If Bakshi were simply using this "relevance" as a gimmick, to ingratiate himself with the young audience, he would be worthy of contempt; but there is ample evidence that this is not the case, and so "Fritz's" crudities, regrettable though they are, are not as disheartening as they might have been. Bakshi's sincerity is no guarantee that his future films will be improvements on "Fritz" (there is no direct relationship in art between sincerity and quality), but sincerity counts for a great deal now in animation, when almost everyone in the industry is cynical and their work shows it.

Despite the film's "political" emphasis, the explicit sex and raw language in "Fritz" guaranteed from the beginning that it would receive either an R or an X rating from the Motion Picture Association's rating agency. After reporters first began poking around the Krantz studio early in 1971, almost every article about the picture described it as either actually or potentially X-rated. In their own comments, Bakshi and Krantz seemed to have mixed feelings about such a rating. Any misgivings had a solid foundation; in the year or two before "Fritz" was released, an X rating became synonymous with hard core pornography, and more than thirty newspapers refused to review X-rated films or to carry advertising for them.

Early in 1972, when "Fritz" was finally completed, it was assigned an X; the publicity about the film may have made any other rating impossible, even though an R would have been more appropriate. Fortunately for Bakshi and Krantz, Stanley Kubrick's "A Clockwork

Orange," one of the most widely praised movies of 1971, was being distributed with an X, too, and "Fritz" thus had the opportunity to profit from respectability by association.

"Fritz" has had yet another out-of-studio problem to contend with, this one subtler and potentially more damaging than the others. It has to do with the movie's relationship to Robert Crumb, the creator of Fritz.

Whenever a comic strip is translated into an animated cartoon, there is always a greater question of the author's involvement than when a novel is made into a screenplay. Comic strips and animated cartoons, if not close kin, are at least cousins, and when comic-strip characters are animated in something like their originator's style, the natural assumption is that he had something to do with the film. This has often been true, from the time of Bud Fisher and the "Mutt and Jeff" cartoons until the present day, when both Charles Schulz of "Peanuts" and Walt Kelly of "Pogo" have been actively involved in the cartoon versions of their great comic strips. Such animated comics have usually been inferior to the originals, but at least there has been no question of the artist's intentions being distorted.

That is not the case with "Fritz." The assumption has been present in some articles about the picture that Crumb somehow collaborated on it with Bakshi, but that is far from the mark. His hostility to the entire project was no secret for months before the picture was released, and when I spoke to him in February, he condemned the completed "Fritz" as "a pitiful attempt."

Crumb's attitude toward the picture is significant not only because the original stories are his, but because of what he and his work represent. Crumb is the most important of the underground cartoonists; only Gilbert Shelton rivals him in popularity and influence. Crumb, after a few brushes with the "New York syndrome," now scorns the "big-time mass-media trip" and concentrates his efforts on underground comic books. Not all underground cartoonists share his contempt for large financial rewards (even Shelton has turned up in the pages of PLAYBOY), but his fear of the tethers that success brings is widespread among underground cartoonists and their admirers; so is his contempt for the businessmen who would like to tie him down. One of his close friends speaks vehemently of Crumb's disdain for "the big-money boys who rush in to exploit any new phenomenon (such as underground cartoons), gobble it up, suck off as many quick bucks as possible, and then spit out the fur and bones on the ground."

What this means is that "Fritz" can be interpreted not merely as a perversion of Crumb's work, but as a counter-attack against Crumb and the other cartoonists who have managed to make their way without complying with the wishes of feature syndicates, commercial comic-book publishers, animation studios or any of the other employers of cartoonists. The underground comic books, for all their excesses, have restored to the comics a personal, individual flavor that has been all but lost in the increasingly vapid strips that fill newspapers and comic books today. Bakshi's "Fritz" has been regarded by some of Crumb's admirers as an effort to cash in on the individuality of these comics and so absorb them into the very entertainment "establishment" that the underground cartoonists have rejected. (There is irony in this, because "Fritz" also breaks with formulas, and, in its early stages, suffered at the hands of some of the same people whom Crumb's most ardent admirers find so distasteful.)

This double-edged hostility to "Fritz" could have damaged it at the boxoffice and even hurt Bakshi's career, but that was never too likely, for reasons that Steve Krantz suggests when he asks, "How many people read underground comics, really?" The answer is, not that many, especially when compared with the millions who will see "Fritz." Undoubtedly, many people will see "Fritz" who have never heard of Robert Crumb, or who have only the slightest acquaintance with his work.

That may be the point. Through "Fritz," Crumb's name will be linked with a motion picture that he believes distorts his work (it is certainly different from Crumb's Fritz stories in spirit) and that he says he never wanted made. The real issue is essentially a moral one: if Crumb feels this way about "Fritz," and if he has felt this way about the project from the beginning, should the film ever have been made? That question can be answered "yes" if, at some point, Crumb freely gave his permission for Bakshi and Krantz to make the picture. If he did, he and his readers are entitled to quarrel with the contents of "Fritz," but not with "Fritz" itself. Unfortunately, sorting out what happened among Crumb, Bakshi and Krantz is not a simple matter, even though it seems likely that Bakshi and Krantz were on solid ground legally from the beginning.

If "Fritz" were a masterpiece, even doubts about the picture's legitimacy would become irrelevant; masterpieces are their own justification, unless the sacrifices required to produce them are really outrageous. But no animated feature made in the early 1970s could be a masterpiece, regardless of its director's intentions; the tools simply are not there. The most that can be expected of any feature cartoon now is that it be reasonably entertaining, and that it lay the foundations for cartoons that are more than entertaining.

"Fritz the Cat" passes those tests handsomely, and that must be regarded as a considerable achievement, not least because—through no real fault of his own—Ralph Bakshi's name has never before been attached to a cartoon nearly as good.

II. Up from Brownsville

Ralph Bakshi was born in Brooklyn, and grew up there in a section called Brownsville. Brownsville is now one of New York's most desperate black slums, but as recently as 1960, it was still ninety per cent Jewish. It was tough; one writer has said that Brownsville was known locally as Spearville, because "if somebody says how about going for a walk, you say first let me get my spear."

Alfred Kazin, the critic, was born and raised in this ghetto, too, but he left not long after Ralph Bakshi was born. He wrote a book about Brownsville twenty years ago, when Bakshi was in his early teens, and in its pages he described a community made up mostly of working-class Jews who abandoned hope for themselves early, and poured their lives into their children.

When Kazin returned to Brownsville years after he had moved away, it was as if nothing had changed: "The early hopelessness burns at my face like fog the minute I get off the subway . . . It is in the faces of the kids, who before they are ten have learned that Brownsville is a nursery of tough guys, and walk with a springy caution, like boxers approaching the center of the ring."

Ralph Bakshi was once a boxer, in his teens: "I boxed for the Police Athletic League between the ages of thirteen and sixteen. I don't think it's on record; I was too young for them to put me on record. But because I was the only Jew in the neighborhood who was willing to fight the Italian and black kids, they let me fight. To keep us from fighting in the streets, they got us into the gym. I love fighting—boxing, you know; switchblades weren't my thing."

Bakshi has a little of the look of a boxer—dark, bulky, rumpled—and he alternates between a cocky self-assurance and a distracted, sometimes frantic grasping for words and ideas as they drift past him ("My English can't compare with what is going on in my head"). The animators who worked with him on "Fritz"—all of them men who have worked with the tired, cynical old pros in charge at most studios today—found Bakshi a "most unusual" director, much younger and more talented and enthusiastic then what they had been used to. Marty Taras, who worked on "Fritz" in New York and is one of Bakshi's admirers, remembers Bakshi as "nervous and fretful, like a mother hen trying to lay an egg on a hot pavement."

Bakshi is an artist—his love for what he does is palpable—but he is an artist who speaks in the urgent accents of Brownsville. The well-bred inanities of a filmmaker like Stan Vanderbeek are alien to him. Bakshi is sensitive about his Brooklyn veneer ("People expect me to drive a cab"), but at times he recognizes that his roots are a source of strength, and that without them he might not have made "Fritz." He says: "My background—the fights, the way I grew up—might have been the best thing in the world to prepare me for one of the biggest fights in this industry, to get animation talked about again . . . I am the right man for the right time in this business. Maybe it needs a fighter to revive it, because no one else can."

Bakshi was born on October 29, 1938; his father was a Russian immigrant who worked in a sheet-metal factory, his mother worked in the garment district. He has one older sister. Brownsville was not exactly fertile soil for a budding artist, and in Bakshi's case, the urge to draw was late in coming. In his adolescence, he remembers,

it was the usual bullshit—guys, gangs, basketball, broads. I was playing the part, with my blackjack and things, and whatever the guys were doing, I was doing. I went to Thomas Jefferson High School, and one day, I was walking around, really depressed, I don't know why. I got a lot of girls, my hair's combed back in a d.a. . . . The academic thing was okay; I was able to skin by without doing much work, so that was cool. I was walking on the second floor and there were some drawings up, by kids in the senior class, that had all gotten blue medals and green medals and red medals. I just looked at them and I said, man, I can do better than that. Mind you, I had never drawn in my life. Sometimes my ego is unreal.

That afternoon, I was sitting on the steps in front of Thomas Jefferson, in front of these doors that lead to the street. There was this banging on the door behind me; they couldn't open it because I was sitting there. The door was banging against my back, and I was slamming it shut because it hurt, but I wasn't budging—that kind of thing. I'm getting ripped in the back and I keep getting angrier and slamming the big steel door shut. I stepped back, and I was going to rap this kid in the mouth when he stepped out of there—and the principal steps out. He said, "Young man, you'll be in my office tomorrow."

I went to his office the next day, and he tells me I'm nothing, I'll never be anything, I'm a typical hoodlum, etc. He told me there was nothing I could do, and I said, bullshit, I can draw. He said, "If you can draw, you don't belong in this school, and we'd like to get rid of you anyhow. There's a school uptown called the School of Industrial Art that takes guys like you." The School of Industrial Art started in the eighth grade; it was a vocational school, but it was highly specialized training. So, if you were a really good artist, you could leave junior high school to go there. The last chance to get in

was coming up; you had to take a test. I got very excited—something really hit my head. I almost started to tremble. I couldn't explain it.

I went up the next day to the principal with my cards saying I was allowed to take this test. There were about thirty kids in this auditorium, all latecomers like me for various reasons. There was this model up there, and the test was that you had to draw the model in different poses. Out of the thirty kids, they took ten, and I was one of the ten.

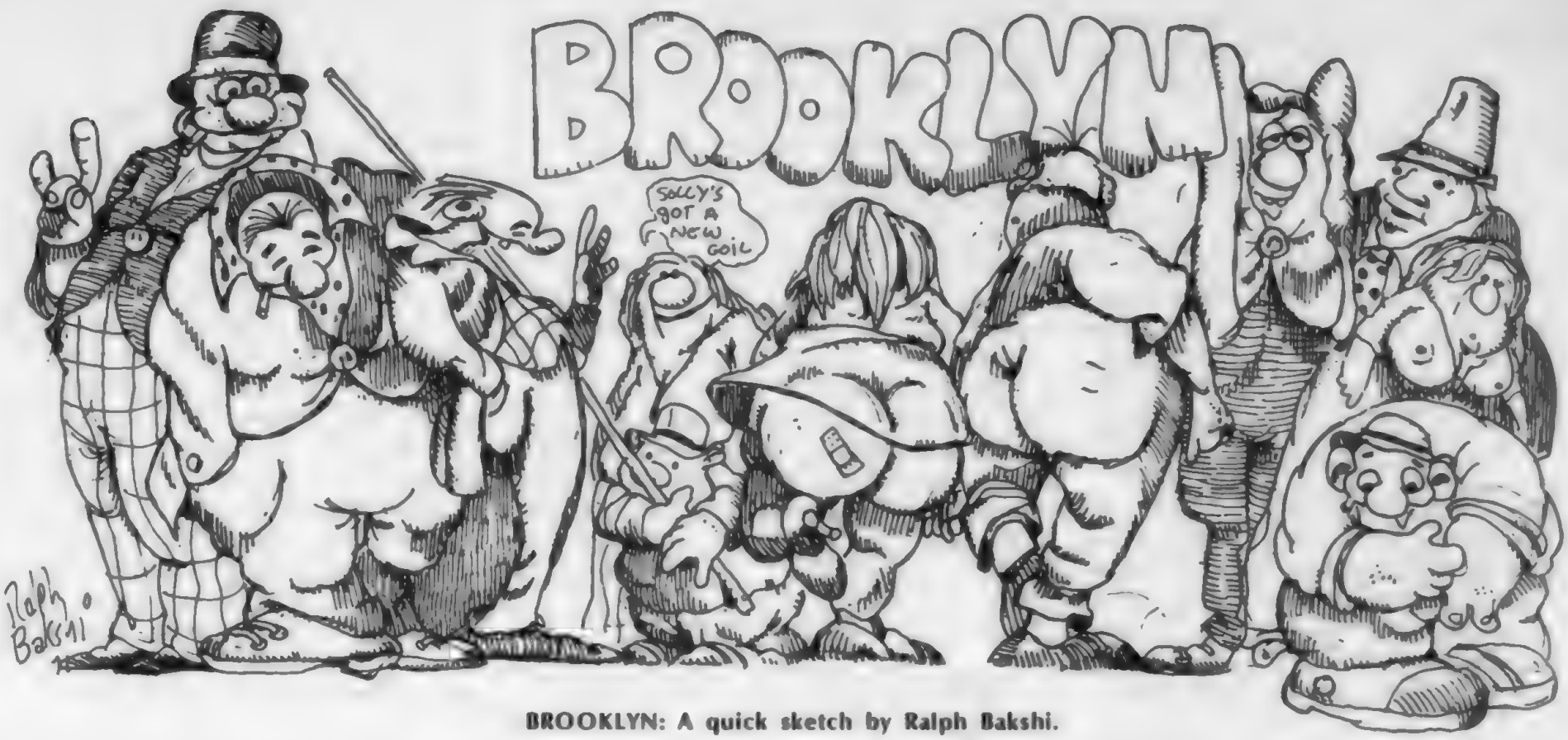
I transferred out of Jefferson the next week. Everyone laughed. My mother flipped, my father broke up. It was ludicrous. I took cartooning and illustration all day; I dropped all my academic courses. That's what the principal had meant at Thomas Jefferson—if you don't want to work, you go to Industrial Art, too. You could spend three years drawing all day. You could sit there and do zero, get your diploma and split. You were allowed to take as many art courses as you wanted, and for every art course you took you had to drop an academic course. So I dropped all my academic courses, and took art all day. I drew day and night, day and night, around the clock. I never hit the streets any more. Guys used to come up and call for me, and I'd tell them to forget it. During my last two and a half years at Industrial Art, I lost thirty or forty pounds. I was working like a madman. My mother got very nervous. I wasn't drawing that well; I just loved it. For the first time in my life, I was doing something—something I really enjoyed. Anyway, to make a long story short, I walked out of the school with the cartooning medal. It was the first and only thing I ever won in school, and one of the few things I'm really proud of.

Bakshi graduated from the School of Industrial Art (now the High School of Art and Design) in June 1956. In November 1956, a few weeks after his eighteenth birthday, he went to work for the Terrytoons studio in New Rochelle, a New York suburb, as an "opaquer," painting the cels on which drawings of the characters had been traced in ink. At that time, Bakshi didn't plan to make animation his career; he wanted to draw comic strips, and he took the job at Terrytoons as a way of marking time. However, his rise up the ladder at Terrytoons was very rapid, for reaons having as much to do with unsettled conditions at the studio as with Bakshi's own talent.

Terrytoons, for most of its life, has not been a studio that nurtured budding animators. The "stars" of Terrytoons were characters like Mighty Mouse, Heckle and Jeckle, Gandy Goose, and Sourpuss, who, when they had personalities at all, were pale and derivative. So were most of the cartoons in which they appeared. The late Paul Terry, who founded the studio and ran it until he sold it to CBS in 1955, was an important figure in the history of animation (the young Walt Disney studied Terry's cartoons when he was learning the craft), but that doesn't make most of his cartoons any easier to look at. When animators who worked for Terry reminisce about him, they remember him talking about money. "We are turning out a five-and-ten-cent store product," one veteran quotes him as saying. The cartoons look it. Terry did not seek quality, and he only rarely got it. At their best, the Terry cartoons have a loose-jointed, springy quality that can be appealing at least in small doses. But most of them are coarse and formless, lacking the precision—of timing, of movement, of expression—that made the best Hollywood cartoons of the Thirties and Forties so memorable.

Bakshi went to work for Terrytoons at a crucial point in the studio's history. After Terry sold the studio to CBS, Gene Deitch was named "creative director," in June 1956. Deitch set about turning Terrytoons upside down, and that was his downfall—and Bakshi's opportunity.

Deitch's assessment of the old Terry studio is harsh: "That studio must have surely ranked the next-after-last on any roster of cartoon studios. For thirty years they had been making the crassest of unadulterated crap. I was trying to make a renaissance on the most moldering foundation to be found anywhere." (Veterans of the old days at



BROOKLYN: A quick sketch by Ralph Bakshi.

Terrytoons would probably agree with that; one former Terrytoons director, who moved to the West Coast a number of years ago, says of the studio, "I am still trying hard to live down my association with them.")

Deitch, who was thirty-one when he took charge at Terrytoons, had worked for UPA's studios in Hollywood and New York, and he tried to reshape Terrytoons into the UPA image: great sophistication in drawing and stories, limited animation, an emphasis on color and design over movement. Such distinctive artists and writers as Ernest Pintoff, Jules Feiffer, and Bob Blechman joined the staff.

Under Deitch, Terrytoons made some exceptionally attractive films, including the "Tom Terrific" television series and a number of theatrical cartoons, among them "The Juggler of Our Lady," "Flebus" and the first few cartoons in the "Silly Sidney" series. To get what he wanted, Deitch took unusual measures. He exercised strong control over all the studio's cartoons from start to finish, to the point that the director's function was significantly altered. It was not just that all decisions on stories remained in Deitch's hands; his control extended beyond that. He recalls:

> I developed, with Tod Dockstader [his sound effects man], a completely new way of making a cartoon sound tracks by mixing [music, voices and sound effects] in advance of animation. In this way, I was able to control the total, detailed timing of the film before it ever got to the animation director. He and the animators got a complete reading of all dialogue, sound effects and music cues to work to. With the general level of staff I inherited, this was the only way to set a new style and tempo of action.

In other words, the directors really were "animation directors"—they were in charge of the animation, and nothing else. They would prepare layouts and hand out assignments to the animators, but that was about where their responsibilities ended. The timing of a cartoon is probably the director's single most important job, and that was taken out of the Terrytoons directors' hands by Deitch and his story men. When Ralph Bakshi became a director, a few years later, Deitch's innovation had been transformed from a device to ensure quality into a straitjacket—at least from Bakshi's viewpoint.

The most important holdover from the Paul Terry era was not a director, or an animator, but a man named William Weiss; by 1956, he had the title of general manager. Weiss was in charge of getting the old Terrytoons onto television, a job at which he was highly successful. While Weiss was bringing money in by peddling the old cartoons, Deitch was spending money making new ones. CBS (with, Deitch says, the help of a few nudges in the ribs from Weiss) noticed the difference. Deitch lost his job in April 1958, and Weiss took over.

Terrytoons' brief flowering ended with Deitch's departure. Under Weiss, the quality of the studio's cartoons sank rapidly to depths never explored even by Paul Terry. The talented men brought into the studio by Deitch began bailing out, and that gave Ralph Bakshi the chance to show what he could do.

In the flux after Deitch left, Bakshi remembers,

> the place was in a panic. They were in the middle of this television series, and they needed animators. They asked everyone if they could animate, and I said I could. This is insanity, right? There was so much going on in this crazy transition that if you said you could, they said go ahead. I didn't know exposure sheets, I didn't know anything. But I figured if you keep it moving, it's going to move. The checkers climbed the wall, the cameramen quit on me—but after six months, it was like sink or swim, I started to animate. I still don't know if I could be an assistant animator.

Consequently, in a year, people thought I was the best animator in the place. I was totally uninhibited, no one taught me. There were no rules I went by, and the things looked kind of crazy on the screen. Some of it was terrible, some of it was fine. I'm sorry houses like Terrytoons aren't around any more, because whatever you could do they'd let you do. They were interested in saving money. Guys would tell me I was crazy for staying there when I could work in other studios, but I was getting more experience, and getting a lot of things out of my system that were wrong. I locked myself in my room and had a wonderful time. People would tell me to go here or there, and I'd say, "Forget it, I'm learning." Basically, I had a ten-year apprenticeship.

Marty Taras, who was a director at Terrytoons when Bakshi was climbing the ladder, remembers that Bakshi "was imbued with an almost religious zeal in learning. He had an amazing drive to learn plus an indefatigable capacity for hard, round the clock work. It's part of his makeup—Drive! Drive! Drive!"

Bakshi began animating in 1959, working on theatrical cartoons with some of the new Terrytoons characters—Deputy Dawg, Hector Heathcote, Hashimoto. In 1964, he became a director of cartoons starring such dreary and short-lived characters as Sad Cat and James Hound. By then, the word "director" as used at Terrytoons didn't mean what it has traditionally meant in animation. As in Gene Deitch's day, the complete soundtrack would be delivered to the director, with the timing fixed. The director would also be given the storyboards for the picure, with the story broken down into a series of rough sketches. The director's function was to prepare layouts—that is, drawings showing how the action would be "staged" in each shot—and then to animate the entire cartoon from his layouts. The traditional concept of the director as the supervisor of the picture—setting the timing for the cartoon and overseeing the story, the layouts, the animation, the voices, the backgrounds, and so on—had been abandoned, and the man who had the title of "director" was, in fact, merely a layout man and animator combined. Tom Morrison, a Terrytoons veteran who was head of the story department under both Deitch and Weiss, was the director in fact if not in name.

Morrison remembers Bakshi now as "particularly enthusiastic, with a unique talent and style all his own. He was a prodigious worker and completely believed in his own judgment in everything he did. We had the usual differences of opinion but I felt we got along very well."

Bakshi is not so gentlemanly when recalling those "differences of opinion." "When I directed my own pictures, I broke up the timing," he says. "They'd time the storyboards and deliver you tracks that were fixed. And everyone else in the place didn't care, they just did it that way. I broke up the tracks, re-timed, re-directed, and consequently got in a lot of trouble."

It's surprising that anyone cared, since the Terrytoons studio under Weiss must have been stifling for anyone who cared much about animation. The footage requirements Bakshi cites are astonishing, at least for theatrical cartoons: "They expected seventy feet a week; I had some weeks of a hundred and eighty, and I'm sure they're very embarrassing. But at any decent studio I would have been out on my ass, so I have mixed emotions."

The budgets, he recalls, were as low as the footage requirements were high.

Eight thousand dollars was what they wanted you to bring them in for, and sometimes we brought them in for six, because we got into so much damned re-use [of animation]. We just started doing re-use at some point, we just didn't care. The footage requirements were very high and Weiss was very strict on them. You were young, you panicked, you just wanted to hold your job down, to learn. Eight thousand up to twelve or fifteen was the highest budget you had for any five- to six-minute short. It came in at about a drawing and a half a foot. The only way I could rationalize it was to give the illusion of motion, to see how much motion I could get from those few drawings. It never worked. You ended up fooling yourself, endlessly.

In 1966, after a year and a half as a director, Bakshi became Terrytoons' creative direcor (or supervising director, as he was called on the payroll records), in effect stepping into the position Gene Deitch had vacated eight years before. He was twenty-six. "CBS made me creative director upon seeing some of the films I had done by myself," he says. "They saw the theatricals and they flipped because there was something different. I don't say it was much different, but anything a little different at Terrytoons was noticeable."

A title is one thing, but the reality is another, and the reality evidently was that Bakshi had less power than Deitch did. Bakshi began colliding with Tom Morrison and William Weiss: "I wanted to go upstairs and do my own recordings, and they wouldn't let me do that. Then I sat in on Tommy's recordings and then I retimed the stuff." The conflict extended throughout the studio: "There were key groups of guys who had grown up with Weiss at Terrytoons and weren't about to do me any favors." The depth of the animosity can be measured by Weiss' attitude; his response was surly when I asked him about Bakshi last year.

Bakshi, for his part, soon decided that the game was not worth the candle, and he remembers that in his gloom he began drifting into Negro bars in Brooklyn, spending hours drinking there. He recalls:

Even if I had managed to be able to change the style and get the guys the way I wanted them, it still was unimportant to me. I don't mind the fight if the fight has some meaning. But the thing we were geared for was television sales; in other words, CBS wanted me to break into television, and do good work for television, and try to improve the theatricals. But the subject matter . . . I'd get very excited about a storyboard for the first three days, very excited about trying to do something different. But it just wouldn't be there. Whether I did a better cartoon or not, it didn't matter. The cartoon itself was geared for a very young audience. I didn't know what was wrong at the time; I wasn't that clear on what was bothering me so much. I rationalized and thought it was the fighting with Weiss, but it was twofold. One, the fighting with Weiss, and two, even if I did a great Bugs Bunny, what did I have? Another great Bugs Bunny, and I still would probably enjoy the old ones better. That was the kind of funk I was in.

After eight months as creative director, Bakshi left Terrytoons to become director of cartoon production at Paramount Pictures' cartoon studio, the only other studio of any consequence in New York that was still making cartoons for theaters.

Whatever Paramount's merits as a refuge from the office politics at Terrytoons, it didn't have much to offer for a cartoon director aspiring to better things. Throughout the Forties and Fifties, Paramount's distinction was that its cartoons were a notch or two better than those Paul Terry was making.

Paramount's origins were more promising than that. The studio began as the Fleischer studio, in the early days of animation. The Fleischer brothers, Max and Dave, distributed their cartoons through Paramount Pictures Corporation, starting in 1929, and lost control of the studio to Paramount in 1942. Although the Fleischers' cartoons were mostly as earthbound as the other

New York cartoons of that period, their Popeye series had some vitality, and a rough charm, and the Fleischers were the only cartoon producers of the time to challenge Walt Disney's supremacy as a maker of long cartoons; two Fleischer features appeared before the studio changed hands, and at least three Popeye cartoons were double the usual length for shorts.

After the studio became Paramount's, and cartoons began appearing under the direction of Seymour Kneitel and Isidore Sparber, any suggestions of quality rapidly vanished. By the Fifties, Paramount cartoons were providing a sort of fever chart for animation. To learn what was wrong with animation at any point during that decade, it is necessary only to watch a handful of the Paramount cartoons made at the time. There are the imitations of UPA, devoid of any of UPA's wit and visual elegance; the Popeye cartoons, with their stale, overworked plots; the cartoons with Baby Huey and Herman and Katnip, geared to children, as earlier cartoons had not been. And so it went. Pencil tests were abandoned, and the animation became hard and crude. In the early Sixties, Paramount turned to television cartoons; it made some for King Features, and then, in the mid Sixties, made the "Mighty Thor" segments for the sixty-five half-hour shows that starred five of the Marvel comic book characters—Iron Man, Sub-Mariner, et al.

By that time, Paramount was enjoying a small renaissance, under the supervision of Shamus Culhane, a former animator for Disney and director for Walter Lantz who had become director of production for the Paramount studio in 1965. Under Culhane, Paramount made not only Marvel cartoons but also a cartoon called "My Daddy the Astronaut," which was designed to resemble a child's crayon drawings; it was the first Paramount cartoon in years to receive any serious attention.

The Marvel cartoons were made for Steve Krantz, a TV producer who had made a deal with Marvel and then had farmed the work out to Paramount and a California studio, Grantray-Lawrence. Krantz had begun his career as a producer for NBC. He was director of program development and then head of international sales for Screen Gems, finally leaving to form his own distribution and production company. In 1967, his subcontractors were at work on three animated television series—the syndicated Marvel super-hero cartoons, a Saturday-morning network program about another Marvel hero, Spider-man (spelled "Spiderman" for television), and a syndicated show called "Rocket Robin Hood."

In May 1967, Culhane left Paramount to go to work directly for Krantz, and Bakshi stepped into Culhane's job—an event that was to be repeated with Culhane's new job in about six months.

The same month that Bakshi took charge at Paramount's cartoon studio, Charles G. Bluhdorn, the head of Gulf and Western Industries, became president and chairman of the board of Paramount itself. Bluhdorn's stay with the company was destined to be a lot longer than Bakshi's. As Bakshi tells the story, it sounds apocryphal, but he insists that it's true: "Bluhdorn came to the studio for the first time, he's walking through the studio and he says, 'What the hell is this?' They told him it was a cartoon studio, and he says, 'I never bought this. I make films, what is this?'

They said, 'Of course, it comes with the whole package.' Fade out. Fade in, three months later, they closed the place down."

The doors closed at Paramount's cartoon studio on December 1, 1967, putting Bakshi out of a job; he says he refused to take more than four weeks' salary after the studio closed, even though he had a three-year contract. Bakshi had time to finish only a handful of cartoons before the closing, perhaps only two. One, called "The Opera Caper," had originated with Shamus Culhane; it was to have been drawn in the style of "My Daddy, the Astronaut," but Bakshi made it in traditional line animation instead, a switch that precipitated the firing of an artist who disagreed with Bakshi's decision. The other was more significant; it was called "Marvin Digs," and it was, as Bakshi says, "a flower-child picture."

"Marvin Digs" is an offensively bad picture, the kind that makes people who love animation get up and leave the theater in disgust. Bakshi himself doesn't have much good to say about it ("I saw the picture once somewhere, vomited and left") and says that it was not finished the way he wanted. But he attaches importance to that cartoon because

that basically is when I started to get involved with things that are happening. "Marvin Digs" was going to have curse words and sex scenes, and a lot more than that. Marvin was a hippie kid. Of course, they wouldn't let me do that. The procedure was, I ran the studio, and no one was there except me and my crew, but I had to send my storyboards up to the main office, two blocks away. Had I been the same guy then that I am now, and if the new job hadn't been so exciting to me that I wanted to go a little slow—I thought I had three years—I would have done whatever I wanted to, anyway. The beautiful thing about animation is, no one knows what you're doing until it hits the screen. It's not like live, when you can see the rushes the next day. But I did what they told me to do, and watered "Marvin Digs" down to a typical 1967 limited-animation theatrical. But I was still very excited; it was one of the best times of my life. I felt very good from gaining confidence from running a studio without Weiss. I was flying by myself, and that felt good.

In the meantime, Shamus Culhane had gone to Canada for Steve Krantz, to oversee the production by a Toronto studio of a science-fiction series called "Rocket Robin Hood." The problems that confronted Culhane in Canada apparently were staggering, and he and Krantz quarreled and parted in the fall of 1967. Krantz turned to Bakshi, after learning that he was available; Krantz says that he had met Bakshi at Terrytoons, when Bakshi was creative director there, and later had heard good things about him from the executive in charge of Paramount's cartoon department. Bakshi says he was reluctant to take the job when Krantz offered it to him, but "the next week, I was in Canada. I learned that I really could not stay out of a cartoon studio for more than a week without getting real sad."

"Rocket Robin Hood" was one of those projects that is doomed from the start—Bakshi remembers working with Italian and Spanish animators through interpreters—but Bakshi evidently made the best of hopeless circumstances, as he had done at Terrytoons and was to do again when running a studio for Krantz in New York City. One artist who worked on "Rocket Robin Hood" says that "Ralph was in tune with the science-fiction needs of the series and the further need for a more cinematic approach . . ." Bakshi provided that "cinematic approach" by bringing in comic-book artists Gray Morrow and Jim Steranko—both highly regarded as illustrators of stories of the science-fiction and "swords and sorcery" variety—to draw layouts and storyboards. Bakshi recalls: "My attitude there was, okay, screw motion; I made the animators trace the layouts, to try to maintain at least a good drawing quality."

The Canadian studio folded in the spring of 1968, and Bakshi returned to New York after six months in Toronto. Meanwhile, Krantz had been having problems with "Spiderman," which was being made for him by Grantray-Lawrence in California. Grantray Lawrence had gone bankrupt late in 1967, after completing twenty half-hours of "Spiderman," and so the demise of the Canadian studio left Krantz with two homeless television series on his hands.

Krantz said in a letter that he had learned his lesson about subcontracting animation:

> We did not have satisfactory performance from subcontractors in the animation field. There is natural enmity. The producer and the subcontractor are absolutely at opposite poles. The producer wants the best in the picture and the subcontractor wants the least in the picture. So we learned, after experiences that were in some ways unpleasant, that if we were going to be in animation, we would have to do it ourselves. Ralph struck me as not only creatively able, but also administratively able, and so we decided to start a studio and not put ourselves in the hands of others.

The new animation studio got off to a shaky start. Bakshi remembers a desperate search for the necessary animation equipment, until finally some ancient desks were found in a loft in the garment district ("Guys did 'Mutt and Jeff' on this stuff, would you believe"). The new studio finished work on "Rocket Robin Hood" and cranked out "Spiderman" half-hours—thirty-two in all—at the rate of one a week, with a fifteen-man crew. That was a small crew to be doing that much animation that quickly, and Bakshi says that it was "very, very difficult. I thought I was insane sometimes. Terrytoons looked good at one point."

In order to spew out "Spiderman" at the required rate of speed, Bakshi made as much use as possible of Grantray-Lawrence's animation, stuffing each half-hour full of scenes of Spider-man swinging from building to building. The Bakshi-Krantz studio "was built on leftovers," Bakshi says. "Quality wasn't my objective then, it was getting the studio started." As in Canada, Bakshi was willing to throw animation to the wolves in order to get his films made.

After "Spiderman," the Krantz studio made a variety of films, none of them distinguished; there were commercials with Peter Max, and a "Max the Mouse" series of five-minute educational films that mixed a smidgen of animation with photos and drawings of historical events.

This was not the sort of stuff that required an animation director's intense concentration, and Bakshi remembers getting restless. "It was so easy to do, it was such a nothing, I didn't really care that much about it, I started thinking about what I'd really like to do in animation." That eventually led to "Fritz."

III. Crumb, His Cat, and the Dotted Line

When Ralph Bakshi talks about his pre-"Fritz" work in animation now, there is a thread of conflict between Bakshi—the blunt, impatient native of Brownsville—and the prevailing styles of the cartoons being made by the studios he worked for, whether they were the UPA-derived films of Gene Deitch, the crass junk of William Weiss, or the clanking TV cartoons of Steve Krantz. Bakshi expresses admiration for the "Ashcan School," the naturalistic American Painters of the early 20th Century, and says, "Basically, I want to get down to street level." Bakshi remembers being unhappy with the emphasis on design at Terrytoons under Gene Deitch:

> I don't want to get involved in doing something that makes a point obliquely. If I'm going to say "screw you," and it's important to say it, and it's right—in the middle of a gang fight—then I can't do it with four abstract characters who say something else. So I had massive fights with these guys, on this level. They were doing beautiful-looking pictures, and they were getting all involved in the storyboards—this means that, and that means this, and this really means that—and I said it means shit. Why not come out and say it?

It's doubtful that Bakshi's dissatisfaction was that well articulated at that time, and in fact, the first cartoon Bakshi directed, "Gadmouse the Apprentice Good Fairy," has been described by one cartoon buff as "probably about the best-designed Terrytoon since Gene Deitch left." (Bakshi was his own designer, as well as his own layout man and animator; he remembers trying to improve the cartoon by using such devices as colored gels lit from below.)

But by the end of his tenure at Terrytoons, Bakshi says, his discontent was taking on concrete form:

> I would go home and do what I thought were underground comics—and I've got tons of them—because they were so gross. At that point, I was embarrassed or intellectually snowballed by other people, because I was drawing queers and lesbians and Mafia leaders at home, and I thought, goddam, I must be a sick guy. It wasn't done then. The image of UPA was still in everybody's minds. So I would put this stuff aside. I didn't realize it could have been turned into animated cartoons, but of course, who would have let me then?

When Bakshi made "Marvin Digs" at Paramount, it was his first step away from the calculated unreality of the Terrytoons cartoons, and that no doubt accounts for his bittersweet attitude toward that excruciatingly bad cartoon. Something of this attitude—a delight in shedding even a few of the conventions that have imprisoned animation in recent years—turns up when he talks about "Spiderman":

> I was starting to sneak lines in "Spiderman" like "New York's a dirty town, man, but I dig it." Some of the lines were more than anyone else had allowed me in television. Some of the pieces of dialogue were realistic; it's a small point, but when you realize all the things we had been doing weren't anything like that . . . this turned me on. Spider was a character who had certain hang-ups that allowed me to do that.

With this frustration bubbling under the surface of his cartoons, Bakshi's response when he first saw underground comic books is understandable: "I said, oh wow, you're finally doing it. I got very aggravated with myself for not quitting the business. I thought to myself, I copped out, I should be doing what those guys are doing, what am I doing television stuff for?"

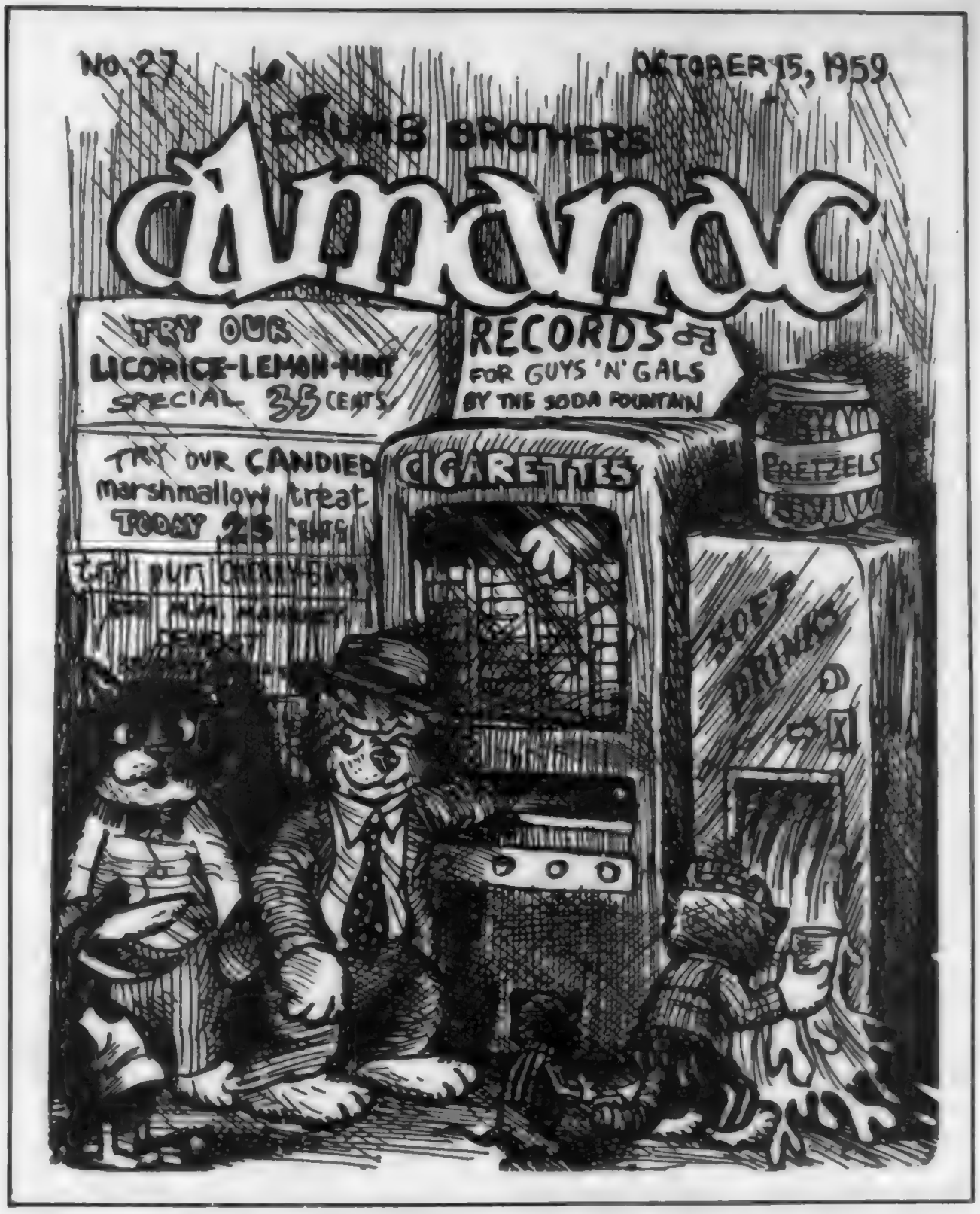
Underground comic books are "underground" in two respects: they are produced and sold outside the usual channels for commercial comic books, and they violate or simply disregard all the restrictions—sex, violence, language, body functions—that have been imposed on commercial comic books and newspaper comic strips. The underground comic books began to appear in substantial numbers in 1968 (around the time Bakshi and Krantz were starting their studio), after their artists had spent several years cutting their teeth in the fledgling underground newspapers and in Harvey Kurtzman's HELP. The great attraction of underground comics for artists has always been the incredible freedom they offer (to the point that in some underground comics, no editorial hand—in the selective sense—can be discerned at all) and this freedom has spawned a number of comic strips that invite discussion in medical rather than

literary terms. More recently, the field has been swamped with mediocrities who have taken advantage of the relaxed or nonexistent standards against which most underground comics are measured; and from the beginning, many strips have been marred by their self-conscious violation of the old taboos.

But in their first couple of years, in particular, underground comic books were an intriguing amalgam. It was possible to see a number of traditions being pulled together in the work of the best cartoonists. There was the comic anarchism of the Marx Brothers and Kurtzman's early MAD, and there were many of the elements of scatological literature, but usually without the ugly neurotic overtones. There had been something like the same union of forces in the "eight-pagers," the notorious little comic books of the Thirties in which public figures and comics characters engaged in uninhibited sexual activity, but the eight-pagers were significantly different from underground comic books in tone: they pandered to their readers' sexual fantasies, whereas the underground comic books expressed their artists' fantasies. The difference lay in the "counter-culture" of the late Sixties; underground comics were an expression of the counter-culture, but it also provided ingredients for their brew. Some underground cartoonists became mired in the quicksands of radical politics or drugs, just as the underground newspapers did, but the better artists avoided such traps, taking what they could use, but nothing more.

The result was a number of comics stories that have the vitality and even the appearance of the great comic strips of the first few decades of the century, before the feature syndicates and realistically drawn adventure strips like "Flash Gordon" squashed the life out of them. Sometimes, this "old-timey" look is the product of deliberate imitation, but more often, what is involved is a relearning of the art of the comic strip; the resemblance to earlier comics is simply a by-product of this process.

This is nowhere more true than in the work of Robert Crumb, the best known of the underground cartoonists. It was Crumb's early comic books—ZAP, SNATCH, etc.—that gave underground comics the lift they needed, and any new comic book of his is certain of sales in the tens of thousands, despite the vagaries of underground distribution. Crumb's work is probably more "archaic" than any other underground cartoonist's—he has identified a score of cartoonists as influences, and his strips constantly suggest associations with this or that artist—but his drawings are always immediately recognizable as his own, even when separated by a number of years and by several



The cover of one of the Crumb brothers' homemade comic books of the Fifties, with Fritz (or his prototype) strongly in evidence.

superficial changes in his style. To a degree unmatched today by any other cartoonist, underground or "establishment," his characters are simple but solid, moving in a universe that has its own physical and emotional reality, subtle but easily grasped in its basic outlines. Crumb at his best combines extraordinarily acute observation of what is going on around him (some of the conversations between his characters are spooky in their accuracy) with a basically sympathetic attitude; when anger does surface in his work (as in a mordant little story about Charles Manson), it has a cold, lucid quality that is far more impressive than the rage that is commonplace in other cartoonists' work.

Crumb is a whole artist; even when he is sloppy or merely noodling, his vision of life is complete in his work. When he writes and draws a poor strip—and he draws a lot of them—the substance of his work doesn't change; it's as if we were looking at it through a smeared windowpane, not in a distorting mirror. Crumb's vision is a comic one, of course. He discerns the comic possibilities in every situation, and in every person, including himself. Carl Barks, who is as good at this as Crumb, but whose comic vision has often had a darker cast, has commented on the similarities in his and Crumb's stories: " . . . I noticed that Crumb's underlying message . . . is that nothing is important enough to be taken seriously. This was a message I often sneaked into my duck stories . . . "

In a way, it's curious that Crumb should have attained his eminence, since his attitude toward life was at odds with the deadly seriousness of the self-absorbed young radicals who set the tone for the counter-culture in the late Sixties. Crumb has mocked revolutionaries in his stories (although he took

issue with Ralph Bakshi over Bakshi's insertion of a condemnation of the radical left in "Fritz"), and his work has been out of favor among political activists of various kinds, particularly those involved in women's liberation.

The answer probably is that most of Crumb's readers aren't performing a "political act" when they read his stories. Crumb's comic books are simply the most entertaining of any available today, with the possible exception of Gilbert Shelton's. Shelton has a gift for observation that rivals Crumb's, his timing is even sharper, and his stories are put together with a fine carpenter's hand that makes Crumb often seem all thumbs by comparison. But Shelton hasn't yet mastered what for Crumb is as natural as breathing: writing and drawing stories about characters who are simple caricatures and yet also infinitely complex. We know just about all there is to know about Shelton's Furry Freak Brothers after reading a few of their adventures, but Mister Natural, Crumb's materialistic guru, is a bottomless well. So is Fritz the Cat.

Fritz must have seemed a natural for animation. Crumb's stories about him are not "cinematic," unlike many comic strips of the last forty years—Crumb's "camera" remains in a fixed position, with no unusual angles or close-ups or other such movie techniques—but Fritz is a rounded, three-dimensional character, like those in the animated cartoons of the Thirties and early Forties. The Fritz stories combine "old" characters with "new" subject matter, and thus were perfect for Bakshi's purposes. As a bonus, Fritz is the most famous creation of the most famous underground cartoonist—and that's a little odd, since Fritz has never appeared in a story drawn for an underground comic book. That was the heart of the problem.

As Steve Krantz tells it, he and Bakshi "had had very serious conversations running over a number of months, with an eye toward doing something in the adult animation field." Krantz says they "thought of a great many projects, none of which seemed right." (One that did seem right was an Annie Fanny cartoon, but Hugh Hefner rejected the idea.) Evidently, Bakshi and Krantz did not turn right away to the underground cartoonists for possible feature material, even though Bakshi lived in New York City's East Village—center for "underground" activity in those days—from the time he returned from Canada until the Krantz studio moved west, and had a passing acquaintance with a few of the cartoonists.

It was Krantz, not Bakshi, who had the idea of putting Fritz on film. In October 1969, Ballantine published a large paperback book containing three of Crumb's Fritz stories, and Krantz remembers, "I discovered FRITZ THE CAT, and I said, 'My God, this is it'." Sometime in the fall of 1969—everyone involved says that they're not sure of the date, but November is a good guess—Krantz and Bakshi got in touch with Crumb, and paid his way from his home north of San Francisco to New York, in order to talk with him about getting the screen rights to the Fritz stories. That was to lead to complications not normally associated with such deals, and those problems had a great deal to do with the kind of artist Robert Crumb is, and his special relationship with his character Fritz.

Crumb is almost five years Ralph Bakshi's junior—he was born on August 30, 1943—and is his opposite in almost every way. Most descriptions of Crumb use words like "gangling," "skinny," "bespectacled," and the like. If Ralph Bakshi was a typical high school extrovert of the Fifties, then Crumb was the familiar high school introvert, whose world was inside his head—until it escaped onto paper. Crumb was raised as one of five children in a Roman Catholic family in Philadelphia; his mother has recalled that he started drawing when he was two or three ("He never liked coloring books").

By the early Fifties, Crumb and his older brother Charles were turning their backs on schoolwork by reading and drawing comic books in great quantities. Their own comics—imitations of the Dell "funny-animal" line, with such titles as FUNNY FRIENDS and BROMBO THE PANDA—existed in only one copy each; they were drawn in pencil in hard-cover composition notebooks, and passed around to family and friends. The brothers temporarily abandoned their home-made comics in 1958, when they published three issues of FOO (subtitled "Lampoons and Parody"), an imitation of Harvey Kurtzman's HUMBUG and the Kurtzman issues of the MAD comic book. FOO was printed by offset, but even it was plainly drawn more for the brothers' own enjoyment than for anyone else's.

FUNNY FRIENDS and BROMBO both died in 1958, victims of FOO, but other single-copy books took their place after FOO itself died. Such titles as CRUMB BROTHERS ALMANAC and then ARCADE were mixtures of comic strips, sketches and text material; Charles and Robert drew many strips together, each contributing his special characters. The old funny-animal fixation was gone (they worked on a "Treasure Island" series for about three years, using human characters), but the brothers remained their own best audience. They were also their own best teachers, and Robert's skills matured rapidly.

Fritz made his debut in a Crumb comic around 1959, but he was a real kitten before that. Crumb has always loved cats, and he began drawing stories about Fritz to amuse his younger sister, Sandy. Crumb depicted Fritz as a real cat at first, in the company of other real cats, doing things that real cats do, but he very quickly raised Fritz up on his hind legs, gave him some clothes and made him a member of the Crumb brothers' little stock company of talking animals, many of them survivors of the early days of FUNNY FRIENDS. (Some of them survived even longer than that; Fuzzy the Bunny, who appeared as a motorcycle hood in Crumb's last Fritz story in 1969, was originated by Charles in 1949.)

Fritz very quickly acquired a distinct personality; he was glib, smooth and self-assured, characteristics that have considerable significance insofar as Crumb's own personality is concerned. Marty Pahls, a longtime friend who is married to Sandy Crumb, puts it this way: "I don't think the difference between Robert, back in 1960-1965, and his characterization of Fritz is all that mysterious. To a great extent, Fritz was his wish-fulfillment. Through Fritz, Robert could do great deeds, have wild adventures, and undergo a variety of sex experiences, which he himself felt he couldn't. Fritz was bold, poised, had a way with the ladies—all attributes which Robert coveted, but felt he lacked."

Crumb himself balks at questions about his relationship with his comic-strip cat—"I just got into drawing him . . . I liked to draw Fritz, he was fun to draw"—but the correlation between the changes in Crumb and the changes in Fritz is striking. Most of Crumb's early stories—drawn in pencil—have been lost or scattered, and only his later (1964-1965) Fritz stories, drawn in ink with a Rapidograph pen, have had wide circulation; however, one transitional

pen-and-ink story, drawn in 1964, was published as R. CRUMB'S COMICS AND STORIES in 1969, with a caricature of Crumb's wife Dana on the cover.

One of the later Fritz stories was published by Viking Press in Crumb's HEAD COMIX in 1968; two others were published in the Ballantine book in 1969, along with a third story, drawn in 1968-1969 especially for the book. Like the earlier pencil stories, the pen-and-ink stories were never meant to be published; Crumb drew them for his own amusement. At least two of these stories—the one in HEAD COMIX and "Special Agent for the CIA" in FRITZ THE CAT—were drawn in a large, thick book, bound in black and filled with blank pages. The book (a bookbinder's sample, Crumb says) was given to Crumb in 1964, at the time when he was leaving for Europe on his honeymoon, by some of his colleagues at American Greetings' Hi Brow Studios in Cleveland. Crumb had moved to Cleveland in 1962, a year after graduating from high school, and, after a year spent doing color separations for American Greetings, he began drawing cards for the Hi Brow series. After his marriage, Crumb and his wife lived in Switzerland and Copenhagen and traveled through much of Europe before settling briefly in New York and then Cleveland again.

Obviously, Crumb's life was different; it had opened up as it never had before. "The whole pattern of Robert's life changed," Marty Pahls says. "For years, he had few friends and no sex life; he was forced to spend many hours at school or on the job, and when he came home he 'escaped' by drawing home-made comics. When he suddenly found a group of friends that would accept him for himself, as he did in Cleveland in 1964, the 'compensation' factor went out of his drawing, and this was pretty much the end of Fritz's impetus."

Crumb's marriage marked the decisive break with his past, and so it was appropriate that it was the occasion for the gift of the bookbinder's sample. In the Fritz stories that Crumb drew from then until sometime late in 1965 or early in 1966, his perspective on Fritz has changed; there is a new irony and detachment in Crumb's treatment of the character, as if he were making one final assessment of Fritz before discarding him. The secret-agent story—undoubtedly spawned by the James Bond craze of the time—is pretty much in the old mold, but in "Fritz the Cat" (in HEAD COMIX) and "Fritz Bugs Out" (which was published first in CAVALIER in 1968, and then in FRITZ THE CAT), Fritz is very much a part of what was to become, in a year or two, the highly publicized "hippie scene." Fritz is a college student, and a con man, and he exploits the apparatus of the budding counter-culture—folk music, sexual freedom, racial consciousness, radical politics, the works—for his own ends. Fritz is so good at seeming sensitive and poetic that he even fools himself. "Fritz is a phony," Ralph Bakshi has said, and that's crude but not inaccurate. The important point is that Robert Crumb's attitude toward his character had changed, so that he could depict him as a phony.

By the time Crumb drew "Fritz the No-Good" late in 1968 and early in 1969, about three years after he had drawn his last previous Fritz story, Fritz's armor had grown so thick that he could survive welfare and even a stint

with some urban guerrillas and still emerge with his ego intact. It's a good story—Fritz himself is funnier than ever before—but Crumb didn't want to draw it ("I like forced myself") and did it only to fill out the Ballantine book.

Crumb had already left Fritz far behind when he moved to San Francisco early in 1967 and fell in with the "flower people" who were then drawing national attention to the Haight-Ashbury district. He attributes Fritz's demise to LSD: "I always liked to draw funny animals, up until about '66 or so [actually, the fall of 1965], when I started taking acid . . . Acid changed my view of everything. It changed my whole attitude toward cartooning; I stopped taking it quite so seriously. After a while, I became a lot less story-oriented, and started drawing for its own sake. Then gradually I got to taking it seriously again . . . If you take it seriously, you can get hung up good. When I got famous, that made me start taking it seriously again. Now I'm trying to loosen up without having to take acid. I haven't taken any for a long time."

The new, looser Crumb adopted a sort of stream-of-consciousness technique, drawing shorter stories with new, human characters; as Les Daniels has said, these human characters don't behave as "normally" as Crumb's animal characters did. Many members of Crumb's new troupe were born in the fall of 1965, during a week's stay by Crumb at Marty Pahls' apartment in Chicago; Pahls has recalled going with Crumb one Saturday to a store "that had a huge pile of old junky[funny-animal] comics from the Forties and early Fifties—the real nowhere crud, you know . . . Robert really flipped out over this stuff. It was done in a hurry by a bunch of careless, cynical hacks, and as such is closer to the mainstream of what we're living in (is dis a system?) than comics by good artists . . . " From then on, Crumb began to use more of the ephemera of American life in his strips—not in an ordered, critical way, as in his last few Fritz stories, but playfully. The explicit sexual content of Crumb's stories—which had been rising for years—shot up in the late Sixties, a development that Crumb credits to S. Clay Wilson, another underground cartoonist.

Whether all these changes have produced comics that are preferable to Crumb's pre-acid work is debatable. With his new casual, free-association approach, he sometimes plumbs new depths in strips that are troubling and mysterious, even when they're funny, but he does so erratically, and most of these strips lack the sustained impact of the handful of long stories he has drawn since 1966. In any event, Crumb has changed, drastically, and Fritz is now firmly locked in his past. He may use Fritz again, but it will not be the same Fritz as before, and it won't be in the same kind of story as before.

Predictably, Crumb was not too happy about the idea of the old Fritz's being resurrected on a movie screen.

Ralph Bakshi remembers Crumb protesting, at the Krantz studio in New York, that Fritz was in his past:

> He's one hundred per cent right. But it's not animation's past; this is what I kept telling him. To animation, it's revolutionary. Robert kept getting so upset—"That's my oldest thing, I'm doing things different now"—and I kept saying, "But that's your medium. In our medium, it's as new as it was the first day you did it, Robert." It's newer for us, because there have been other things done occasionally in strip work that have gone that way. In animation it's unbelievable—commercially. We all have done stuff on our desks during lunchtime.

Bakshi remembers that—apart from his reservations about using Fritz at all—Crumb was enthusiastic about the drawings Bakshi had prepared to show Crumb what kind of movie he had in mind:

> He did say, "I'm not sure," and I did say, let me try some more. But he told me he loved the drawings. So I met him a couple of nights after, and he said he'd been wandering around New York because the drawings were

so great he hated to disappoint me. I stressed how important it was for me to do this film—which was honest, it's been a labor of love ever since I started . . . The first visit he said, "Let me think about it," then there was a firm yes somewhere along the line.

Crumb's account is different. Of Bakshi's presentation, he says:

I didn't really love [Bakshi's drawings]; they were okay. They flew me to New York, and I went and looked at them. I was real distressed; I walked around New York for a couple of days, wondering what the hell I was going to do. They had all this work done, they had gone ahead and done all this work before they even contacted me . . . Ralph Bakshi had done all this what looked like stills, and mockups and everything . . . Then he asked me if it was okay with me if they did it. I said to let me think about it, because it looked to me like it would be a really big disappointment to Ralph Bakshi if I said no. I thought about it, and I guess I did tell him no, but he said, "Don't say no, let us work on it a little more before you say no, and show you some more stuff," blah blah blah, just leading me on and leading me on. I never gave him a firm no . . . don't use my characters or I'll get my lawyers on you—or said anything like that.

Crumb says that he left New York without giving his approval to the film, and never signed a contract; Steve Krantz says that he received a contract, signed by Crumb, in the mail, and that in return Crumb received twelve thousand five hundred dollars, which will be supplemented by a percentage of the film's gross proceeds.

These are murky waters, and the two people who could shed the most light are not of much help. Steve Krantz is reluctant to say much more than that his dealings with Crumb were legally correct, and Crumb's San Francisco attorney, Michael Stepanian, won't talk to people who want to ask him questions about "Fritz." It's possible to get from Bakshi's and Crumb's accounts a reasonably good idea of what happened between them on the personal level, but neither is a very reliable guide to the legal realities of the situation. However, it's difficult to believe that Krantz would have gone hunting for a distributor and financing for "Fritz" without believing he had a firm legal foundation for his claim to hold the rights to Crumb's character.

By Krantz's account, the reception he got from distributors could hardly have been any chillier if he had had no claim to the rights at all. "When I say that every major distributor turned it down, this is not an exaggeration," he said late last year. The break came sometime during the spring of 1970, when Warner Brothers agreed to distribute "Fritz" and to provide money for making the picture. Although little preliminary work for "Fritz" had been done at the time, Bakshi discharged some of the people who had been working on the studio's limited-animation cartoons, and hired animators who were alumni of the old New York full-animation studios. Animation on "Fritz" began early in June 1970.

Throughout 1970, Bakshi and Crumb talked on the phone occasionally. Crumb remembers their conversations this way:

He called me up a couple of times and said they were working on it some more, and one time he called me I said no, I don't want you to do it, and he talked to me and pleaded and said let us work on it some more before you say that; let us work on it and show it to you before you say no, you can decide then, when you see that . . . So I said, well, okay.

Bakshi remembers Crumb's changing his mind and attempting to stop production over the phone: "He said no over the phone, and Steve went through the roof. At that point he had spent a lot of money."

Late in November 1970, Bakshi and Krantz flew to San Francisco and saw Crumb and Stepanian; Krantz says, "This was way after the contract, and a courtesy **only**." They took with them a short reel of film containing a few minutes of finished animation, pencil tests, and shots of some of Bakshi's storyboards. The reel had not been made to show to Crumb, but rather to Warner Brothers. "They wanted to see what the level of animation would be," Bakshi says, "and I thought I'd show them a little more. They wanted heavy control, so Steve pulled out." Specifically, he says, Warner Brothers wanted movie stars' voices for the characters (none of the voices for the picture are well known; Bakshi did one voice himself, and Phil Seuling, a Brooklyn comic-book dealer, did another) and also wanted him to tone down the material, removing the explicit sex in a scene with Fritz and Big Bertha, an uninhibited crow.

"I don't know what they thought they bought," Bakshi says. "They knew Crumb, they flipped over him, they flipped over the drawings, they flipped over my screenplay—then I showed them what I was doing, and they loved the style, but it was so strong. They wanted me to tone it down. We didn't want to tone it down. So we all shook hands, and we said, 'Great,' and we left." Shortly before Thanksgiving, with the Warner money gone, the studio was reduced to a skeleton crew of one animator, two assistants, a layout man and a background artist.

(For its part, Warner Brothers won't even admit that there ever was a distribution agreement. Relations with Warner Brothers were evidently not as cordial as Bakshi now suggests, since a special screening of "Fritz" by the American Film Institute at Los Angeles was canceled in March after it was learned that a Warner executive would be present.)

Shortly before the layoffs, Bakshi called his crew together to tell them that he was going to the West Coast to seek financial backing for "Fritz," and then he and Krantz left for San Francisco. Krantz says, "We went to San Francisco to get money from Fantasy Records, and because we were there we said we'd show the material to Crumb." Krantz met with Stepanian, Bakshi says, while he talked with Crumb. Bakshi recalls: "Steve had said that Robert or somebody had said no again, that I should go to San Francisco and tell him we've got the contract and everything, and everyone wants it . . . Whenever there was something they wanted me to clear up with Robert, I cleared it up . . . I was the contact with Crumb, on the artistic level. I had nothing to do with negotiations, nothing to do with contracts."

Bakshi and Crumb watched the presentation reel for "Fritz" in a San Francisco screening room. The finished animation in the presentation reel was of Fritz and Big Bertha, a busty prostitute, in the throes of passion, and Crumb wasn't impressed by it: "It wasn't bad . . . That fragment was better than Yogi Bear, but it wasn't Walt Disney." Bakshi, on the other hand, remembers that "Crumb flipped . . . he loved it, except for one thing—he wasn't sure about the voices, that's all."

"I was treated very nicely," Bakshi says. "We spent the whole day together, and I told him the film was on, and that he had said yes, and he agreed that he had said yes . . ." Bakshi says he told Crumb that it would create havoc if production were stopped, because so much money had already been spent at that point. "Part of my saying, please Robert, hang in there—even though he had signed the paper, because I had

always wanted to please Robert—was the unbearable pressure on me [because of the money already spent] . . . I told him the picture's moving, things are going great, what are you saying no for if we've got a contract. I explained to him what the realities were. It wasn't one guy sitting at a board drawing a picture, there were forty people working." Bakshi remembers that Crumb departed with some friends, leaving his wife and Bakshi together (Crumb says that he met Bakshi for lunch, then "stuck him with my lawyer and ran away with some friends of mine," but Bakshi says he never saw Stepanian). Bakshi says he stated his case again to Dana Crumb and left for home.

As Crumb tells it, he in effect surrendered the decision on the film to his wife and his lawyer; he says that his wife signed a contract during Krantz's and Bakshi's visit to San Francisco, although Krantz disputes this vigorously. Crumb recalls:

> My lawyer was really hot for this, because he went to all this trouble to write up this hot-shit contract that was supposed to be real good for me. He had some Hollywood lawyer friend of his help him, you know, some guy that was used to writing movie contracts . . . My wife was hot to do it to get some money, you know. Immediately, when I signed the contract, I got ten thousand dollars [Krantz says the figure is twelve thousand five hundred], so that was kind of enticing—to her. All these people were telling me what a great thing it would be to have this movie of Fritz the Cat. I just knew the whole thing would be a hassle. Everybody wanted it more than I didn't want it.

In any event, Bakshi's visit to San Francisco closed the book on Crumb's role in the production of "Fritz." Crumb did not see or talk to Bakshi again for more than a year, until Bakshi showed the completed film to him in February.

The distribution and financing problems were also cleared up late in 1970, when Krantz found new backers and a distributor for the film. Cinemation Industries, a small, aggressive New York distributor that has established a good record recently for picking unlikely winners (both "Johnny Got His Gun" and "Sweet Sweetback's Baadasssss Song" were Cinemation releases) and Fantasy Records (another small company that has enjoyed success, from its Creedence Clearwater Revival albums) put some money behind it. Krantz has recalled that Cinemation, unlike other distributors, reacted to "Fritz" with "tremendous enthusiasm"; that may not be too surprising when "Fritz" is measured against some of the films Cinemation has handled in the last few years—"Girl on a Chain Gang," "Teenage Mother," "The Female Animal," "The Seducers," "I Drink Your Blood" and "I Eat Your Skin."

The question of Crumb's relationship to "Fritz" will continue to hang over the movie, and not simply because Crumb is anxious to make clear that he had nothing to do with its production.

Crumb was disillusioned by his dealings with a few large corporations (including those that published FRITZ THE CAT and HEAD COMIX), and since then he has hoed his own row, sticking to underground comic books. He has become so well known in the process that a magazine like THE NATIONAL LAMPOON can parody Crumb without fear of puzzling too many of its readers. Crumb is a cartoonist who has made it—who has financial success constantly

available to him—without making any compromises.

Crumb relishes his independence; he remembers the time, not long ago, when Hugh Hefner of PLAYBOY "sent his cartoon editor to make me an offer. A strip for them every month, and they'd give me five hundred dollars a page. I had the pleasure of telling him to stick it; one of the great satisfactions I've had. Five years ago, I would have jumped on that, hook, line and sinker. I don't need any of that shit; I can do exactly what I want and get paid for it."

Of course, there are plenty of underground cartoonists who aren't in the same position; probably only Gilbert Shelton and one or two other artists have comparable freedom. The fear among some of Crumb's admirers has been that "Fritz" signals the end of Crumb's independence, and so the hope of independence for less successful cartoonists. If Crumb, the most famous and popular and influential of the underground cartoonists, has been bowed by the exploiters' yoke, what hope can there be for artists who are struggling to make their way? Without Crumb's example, won't they be more likely to succumb to sweet temptations?

Crumb lends some support to the notion that he has been plucked by greedy entrepreneurs; in his more benign moods, he refers to Steve Krantz as a "fat cat," and is much more caustic at other times. Krantz himself told a WALL STREET JOURNAL reporter last year, "I think Crumb is afraid the movie is going to be a hit and he'll be corrupted by a lot of money. He'll find, as we all do, that it's very easy to live with that kind of corruption."

"New York capitalist", (Crumb's phrase) though he may be, Krantz positively shines when compared with most other animation producers—especially in New York—and he seems to have given Bakshi a free hand in the actual production of the film. In any event, it seems obvious from what Crumb has said about Krantz that he would never have said even "let me think about it" to Krantz alone; it was Bakshi's eagerness to make the movie that gave Crumb pause. Crumb's indecision—however it was expressed—led to a movie that will not bring him anything he wants. It will bring him more money and more fame—superfluities so far as Crumb is concerned—and it will focus attention on a part of his past that he wishes dead and buried. Since Bakshi is responsible for all of this, what really matters in determining whether Crumb has been "exploited" is what happened between Crumb and Bakshi.

Crumb has had kind words for Bakshi, at least as compared with his comments about Krantz ("Ralph's an okay guy," Crumb said last year. "I mean, he really wants to make a good film, I guess, although I'm not so certain of how much taste he has"). Crumb evidently responded to Bakshi as to a fellow artist, and that response was justified. Even though it was Krantz who "discovered" FRITZ THE CAT, it is obvious that Bakshi saw in "Fritz" a vehicle for achieving some of the freedom enjoyed by the underground cartoonists. Bakshi says of Crumb, "Robert's one of the greatest cartoonists in the country. He revived cartooning, it was dying before he came up, and I want to do the same for the animation industry," and he says of "Fritz," "It's an underground cartoon, not a big-ass media thing."

"Fritz" is not an "underground" film, by any stretch of the imagination—no movie that was made and distributed within the normal channels qualifies for that label—but Bakshi's meaning is clear, and his sincerity was plain to Crumb. However, it seems doubtful that even that would have been enough to sway Crumb when he had so many good reasons for not wanting the picture made at all. Something more must have been involved.

(Continued on Page 47.)

All in Color for Seventy-five Cents

By MARK JAMES ESTREN

Let us be charitable, if not yet complimentary, in assuming that the cartoonists of underground comics will be able to do as much with the color medium as they have already done with black-and-white formats. Let us grant the inherent weakness of early experiments in any new form, and point to early underground comics (say, 1963-1966) to demonstrate that talent, like murder, will out. Let us even assume that a bad beginning guarantees future progress ("nowhere to go but up," and all that).

Behind all the rhetoric, unfortunately, we'll be left seeing the first color underground comics as disappointments at best, abject failures at worst.

It was only a matter of time before color came to the underground field, opening new vistas for the artists and, unknown to them, closing others at the same time. What is surprising is that the wit, vitality, and karmic energy which the cartoonists have applied to earlier limitations of comic-book form (panels, perspective, the consecutive story line, etc.) have failed them in the case of color. Like the early workers in color film, circa 1920, the underground cartoonists are simply using their black-and-white style in a color context, and the result is more unsettling than stimulating.

Three very different color comics released during summer 1971 show how far the cartoonists have to go to come to grips with the technical advance a color wash provides—and how far they have to go to justify the steep price (seventy-five cents to one dollar per book) which the color comics demand. The best of the three, simply called **COLOR**, is by Vincent Moscoso ($1.00 plus 15 cents postage from the Print Mint, 830 Folger Avenue, Berkeley, California 94710). Moscoso's strange metamorphoses, disregard of words, and odd dreamlike thought patterns, coupled with his constant reworking of the comic-book themes of an earlier age, fit as well into the color format as they do into the black-and-white one. COLOR, which begins witha spaceship-sperm conception upon a planet-egg and which continues through scenes of interpersonal violence and dreamlike symbolism to a finale set again in deep space, is as fine an example of Moscoso's technical mastery as anything he has done. With the added dimension of color the interplay among his objects takes on new depth and eerie (if hardly serene) beauty.

Alas, COLOR is successful despite Moscoso, not because of him. For the extra depth the story gains from the color format comes in fact from that format, not from the artist. Moscoso's own considerable talent is nowhere brought to bear on the problem of color itself—there is not even an attempt at so rudimentary an effect as the metamorphosis of one color into another. The drawings in COLOR are just like the scores of drawings Moscoso has done in black and white: his style itself guarantees the book a kind of success, but he has not yet come to grips with the special powers and problems of the color medium.

Yet Moscoso's COLOR is as far above Greg Irons' **LIGHT**, (75 cents plus 15 cents postage from the Print Mint) as the work of an innovator is above that of his imitators. In LIGHT, perhaps out of awe of the color medium, Greg Irons' great achievements of the past several years have evaporated, and his style has regressed to the point of being just another imitation of the "metamorphosis school" of Moscoso and Rick Griffin. LIGHT begins with a quote by Tom Veitch concerning an unstoppable chain reaction at the core of the universe, and the book intends to illustrate that chain reaction. What LIGHT actually does is demonstrate graphically (pun intended) that some things are better left in a black-and-white medium. Drawings which would have appeared innovative, or at least grotesque, in shades of grey merely look silly in green, blue, yellow, and purple. The monsters of the mind which Irons creates look rather ridiculous in rainbow hues. As a matter of fact, the best pages of LIGHT, containing the best draftsmanship as well as the best idea-communication, are the ones in which the fact that the book is in color is most played down. Thus, a full-page representation of a monster called Power (which was drawn by Irons and Dave Sheridan) is done almost completely in green, on a yellow background; and a two-page spread showing the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse is done in muted grey on a green background, which might as well have been a darker grey on white.

To be sure, LIGHT gives more hints than does Moscoso's COLOR of what the underground cartoonists will be able to do with color when they stop being intimidated by it. One two-page spread, in which gigantic Viking ships do battle beneath a purple sky, gives an overwhelming feeling of power; and a one-page drawing of a space creature devouring his mortal prey, with the creature's body and carcass's entrails blending into the night sky, hints at the chilling terror which color can occasionally communicate (as it sometimes did in the old E.C. comics of the Fifties). As a whole, though, LIGHT has no need of being a color book, and its serious intent is damaged rather than helped by the new medium.

The best indication of what's wrong with the color underground comics comes from **BUM WAD**, by Dave Geiser and L. K. Stalker (75 cents plus 15 cents postage from the Print Mint). This comic came out about the same time as Geiser's **DEMENTED PERVERT COMIX** (50 cents plus 15 cents postage from the Print Mint), and there's just no reason for the one to be in color and the other in black and white. Both books contain Geiser's often unique ideas (**e.g.** hints on being a bum in BUM WAD); both contain inimitable, usually disgusting characters (**e.g.** "Bobby Boilsucker" in DEMENTED PERVERT); in both, even the best ideas are generally vitiated by Geiser's crude, over-busy style; and in sum, there simply is no reason to have produced one book in color. At least the Print Mint chose the better book to put into the more expensive format: a piece in which things dream of people as people now dream of objects, another Geiser satire on the mass media and the people who make them go, and a concluding story in which the supposed horrible influence of underground comics is satirized make the book pleasant reading, if scarcely the trenchant social commentary that Geiser apparently considers it.

The question remains: why color in the underground comics? Why, specifically, in these particular comics? The technical advances of the Print Mint seem to have outdistanced the ability of the cartoonists to cope with the new medium. All the Print Mint color comics are exceptionally well reproduced, certainly worth their extra cost if one enjoys color for its own sake. But innovation is missing—and without innovation, the color comics are no better than the fad which all underground comics originally seemed to be.

There is, however, a good deal of light at the end of a relatively short (one hopes) tunnel. At least two publishers other than the Print Mint, namely Krupp Comic Works and the Rip Off Press, have published or soon will publish color comics. It is in the latter outfit's **UP FROM THE DEEP** ($1.00 plus 15 cents postage from Rip Off Press, Box 14158, San Francisco, California 94114) that the light shines particularly brightly.

(Continued on Page 46.)

GOING HOME

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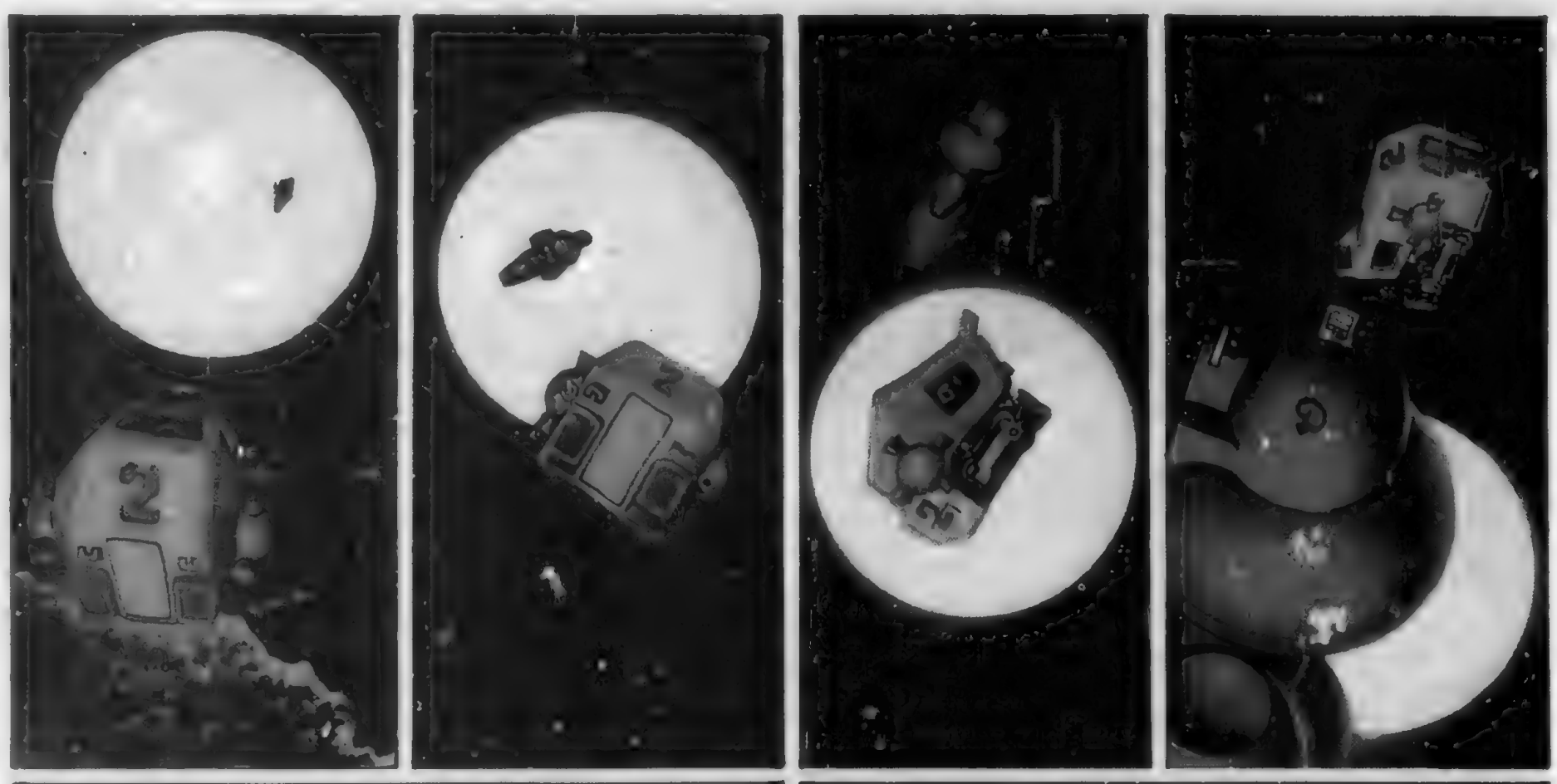
OLA, - I'M ABOUT 300 FEET FROM THE SURFACE OF ASTEROID ROSA 628. I THINK I CAN GET CLOSER DESPITE THE ROTATION -- OVER!

HERMAN! - CANCEL THE MISSION! WE HAVE AN EMERGENCY ON BOARD. RETURN AT ONCE! OVER AND OUT!

HUH? ROGER! - OUT.



HURRY TO CAP'S DEN IN THE CENTRIFUGE... HE'S HAD A HEART ATTACK!

HE'S CONSCIOUS. HE WANTS TO TALK TO US.

HERMAN, OLA, YOU'VE BOTH BEEN WITH ME A LONG TIME — AND IT'S BEEN A GOOD TIME. MY LIFE WILL END SOON. DON'T BE AFRAID FOR ME MY CHILDREN... I ACCEPT IT. I'VE HAD A FULL AND PRODUCTIVE LIFETIME... NOW I'D LIKE TO SEE MY HOME BEFORE I EXPIRE.

WHEN I'M GONE, THIS SHIP WILL BELONG TO YOU. IT'S ALL I HAVE TO LEAVE YOU. THE PEOPLE OF EARTH WON'T RECOGNIZE YOUR RIGHT TO OWN THE WANDEROR OR **ANY** PROPERTY... BECAUSE YOU ARE ARTIFICIALLY CREATED HUMANOIDS — ANDROIDS. FOR THAT REASON I ADVISE YOU TO AVOID THAT AREA AFTER I'M DEAD... BUT NO MAN EVER HAD A FINER SON AND DAUGHTER... UNNGH!

CAP!

NO PROTESTS NOW! I'M ALRIGHT. I'LL LAST THE 2 MONTHS JOURNEY TO EARTH ... AT SUPERPHOTOSPEEDS... GO SET THE COURSE ... I'LL SLEEP NOW.

WHAT'LL WE DO HERMAN?

AS HE TOLD US!

BUT WHAT WE DO IF HE DIES?

DUNNO!

AAAH! WHATTA-[illegible]IE! I KNEW I'D MAKE IT!
YES CAP! THERE ARE MANY VOYAGES YET FOR US TO MAKE.
CAP. WILL WE SEE ANY TERRAN SHIPS?
I DON'T KNOW. IT'S BEEN SO LONG... THINGS WEREN'T TOO STABLE WHEN WE LEFT.

IT LOOKS SO PEACEFUL FROM HERE!

... THAT'S ODD. THE CLOUD COVER SEEMS MORE EXTENSIVE THAN I RECALL ... UNSH!

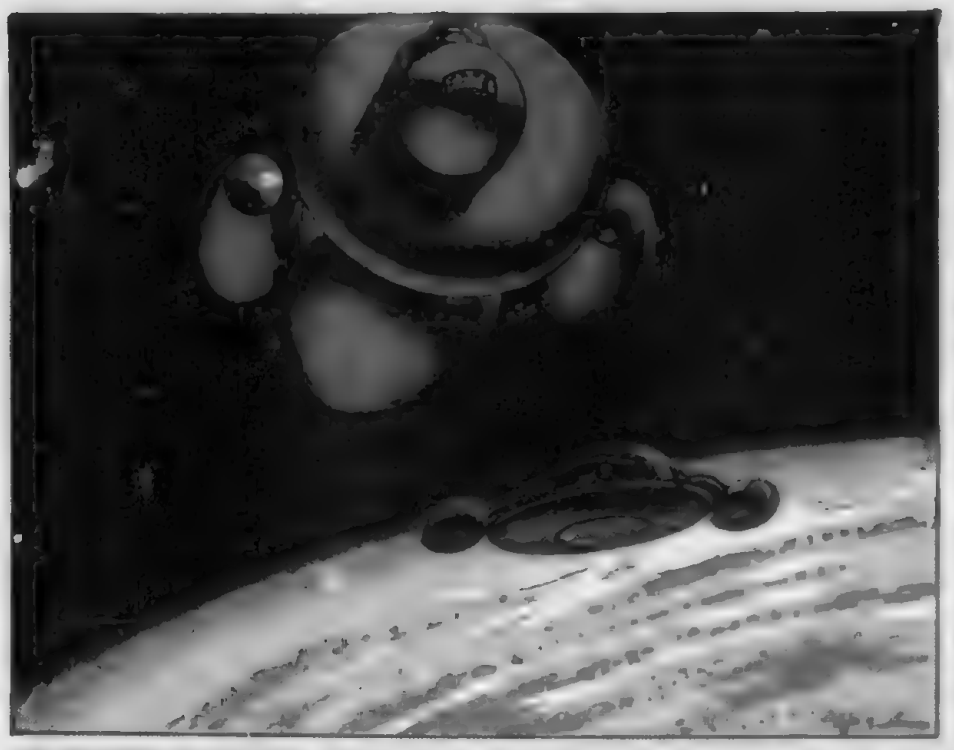
OOH GODS!

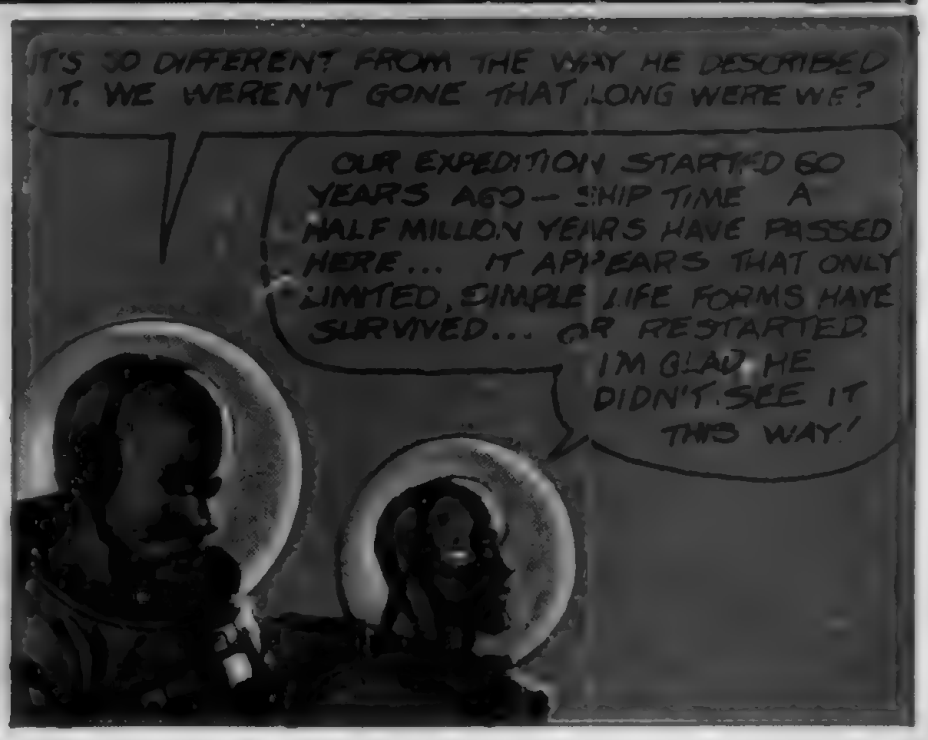
ANOTHER ATTACK!
OXYGEN AND STIMULATOR, QUICKLY!

... NO USE...
HE'S DEAD, HERMAN!

WE'LL TAKE HIM TO TERRA SURFACE FOR BURIAL, AS HE WISHED

THE SPECTROGATOR SHOWS: A LOTTA CARBON DIOXIDE,... NITROGEN, WATER,... ARGON... ... AND SOME OXYGEN. TEMPERATURE AT OUR TARGET LOCATION: 185 DEGREES F. WE'LL NEED SPACE SUITS! ... AND THE DIGGER




IT'S SO DIFFERENT FROM THE WAY HE DESCRIBED IT. WE WEREN'T GONE THAT LONG WERE WE?
OUR EXPEDITION STARTED 60 YEARS AGO — SHIP TIME A HALF MILLION YEARS HAVE PASSED HERE... IT APPEARS THAT ONLY LIMITED, SIMPLE LIFE FORMS HAVE SURVIVED... OR RESTARTED.
I'M GLAD HE DIDN'T SEE IT THIS WAY!

CAPTAIN SLOAN WAS THE LAST OF HIS PEOPLE.

YES! IT IS SAD.

THE HUMAN RACE HAS PASSED AWAY— WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

...IT WAS JUST A SPECK IN TIME; WE ARE LEFT!

WE'RE SO SMALL... WHAT WILL WE DO?

WE'LL DO AS CAP TAUGHT US. IT WILL BE GOOD;... WE'VE GOT THE WHOLE UNIVERSE!

WE'LL MISS HIM!

THE END

By I. KLEIN

A VISION OF KATZENJAMMERS

A veteran animator tells how he got his first job as a cartoonist when he and animation were young

By 1918, animated cartoons were a regular part of the programs in motion picture theaters, but they were still a novelty. People wondered how drawings could be made to seem alive. There was never any question that they were anything but drawings, since they were rendered in black outline with solid blacks where needed.

On a Sunday afternoon in that year, I was taking a long walk with some friends, and we were deep in conversation about matters of interest to teenagers. Somehow my mind drifted from our discourse. I remembered a "Katzenjammer Kids" comic strip in the New York JOURNAL that was accompanied by this caption: "Look for the Katzenjammer Kids as an animated cartoon in your local movie theater." I resolved right there that I would try to get into animation.

As soon as I returned home, I wrote a letter to the "Katzenjammer Studios," in care of the JOURNAL. In this letter, I explained that I had been attending the Fawcett Drawing School in Newark, New Jersey, for four years in the evenings . . . that I had a lettering job with a New York City firm . . . that I had also attended the National Academy of Design for two years during the day.

A week later, I received a letter from the Hearst International Film Service, whose address was 729 Seventh Avenue in New York City. The letter was signed by Gregory La Cava. He asked that I come with samples of my drawings to the studio on the following Monday.

I became so excited when I read that letter that I could not contain myself. I was so positive that I would get the job that I told my employer that I was resigning at the end of that week. My employer was surprised by my sudden decision, and he asked me if I were dissatisfied with my pay. When he offered to raise my salary, I told him that I liked working for him, but that this was my big chance to get into the real art world.

Monday morning arrived at long last. The train from Newark took me to West Thirty-third Street in New York, and from there I walked up by way of Broadway to Forty-ninth Street and Seventh Avenue. On the way, I passed a theater; the title of the play being presented there was accompanied by a sign telling how long the show had been running: "Oh Lady, Lady" - "Third Month." I thought this was a sneaky, funny attention-getter, and that may say something about the manner in which a cartoonist's mind works.

I took the elevator at 729 Seventh Avenue to the proper floor and found myself in a foyer. On the walls were huge photographs of famous movie stars in gilded frames; at least two of the photos were of Marion Davies. There was no receptionist nor even a desk for one, only the photographs and three or four doors without signs on them. I chose one door and entered a long, dimly lit corridor lined with more doors. To my great relief, one of the doors had a sign on it: "HEARST INTERNATIONAL FILM SERVICE."

Behind that door was a large room with an eerie, twilight atmosphere. The large windows were all covered by window shades. Men were sitting at strange drawing boards, which contained small, glowing window panes that cast their light on the faces bent over them.

No one came forward to ask me my business, but there was a partitioned-off section to the right, with an open door, and I figured that must be the office. A man was seated at a desk, and when I asked, "Mr. La Cava?", he nodded yes. I showed him my letter, and he examined my portfolio of samples very carefully.

Gregory La Cava was to become a famous director of live-action feature motion pictures in the 1930s. He died in 1952. In 1918, La Cava was a young man, slender and dark-haired, with a Latin appearance. His manner was very pleasant and friendly. When I told him that I had studied at the National Academy of Design, he told me that he too had been an Academy student. After asking me some more questions, he said, "I like the way you handle pen and ink. Now we have two Academicians working here, Mr. Klein and Mr. La Cava." (I liked the way he put my name first.) That was how he told me that I had the job. When he asked how soon I would like to start working, I replied, "Now."

Now that I was "in," my new boss took me to one of the men at the drawing boards and told him I was to be his assistant. His name was George Stallings, and he was an "animator"—a new word in my vocabulary. George was then a young man in his late twenties.

Illustrations by the author

There was an empty desk next to Stallings' desk, and that was to be my place. As soon as La Cava left, Stallings told me that I was to be his inker. Some of the other men in the room were also animators, some were inkers, two were story men who worked with La Cava on the stories for the cartoons. There were also several girls, whose job was to trace certain portions of other drawings and to paint in the solid blacks. The entire staff consisted of about twenty people.

A rack of shelves in George's animation desk was piled with sheets of letter-size paper, and I could see drawings on some of them of characters from the Katzenjammer comic strip. The drawing board on the desk was tilted at an upward angle. Now I could see, cut in the drawing board, a glass-covered hole slightly smaller than the paper. Two short pegs were set in the board above the glass, and holes punched in the animation paper matched the pegs. There appeared to be only one sheet of paper on Stallings' board, but when he turned a switch, the light beneath the glass pane shone through, revealing several sheets, one above the other, with figures in progressive action.

Stallings picked up a batch of about twenty drawings and flipped them through his fingers. The cartoon figures on the separate sheets of paper blended into a continuous flow of action by one "living" cartoon character. George stopped flipping and spread out the papers; they were once again only a series of still drawings showing the stages of an action. He flipped them again . . . there was life again. Animation. That was it.

The animation paper was of a fairly heavy ply, hence the need for the semi-darkness of the room, so that the light in the animation board could penetrate several sheets at a time. That was how the animator could relate one drawing to the others. (Now, the animation paper is of a lighter ply, and the drawings are traced onto celluloid before they are colored and photographed. But in those days, the drawings on the animation paper, after they were inked, were photographed directly by the animation camera.)

The drawings that Stallings flipped were in pencil. My job, he explained, was to ink them. Offhand, that sounded as if I were to trace over his pencil lines. It was not that simple. The faces and bodies were without features or any other details beyond the animated action. I had to ink in the features of the characters directly, without further pencil drawing. I was given a model chart of the Captain, the Inspector, Mama and Hans and Fritz. One kid had a pompadour of stiff, straight hair . . . the other had blond hair with a curl on top . . . the Captain had a beard . . . Mama had a black bun hairdo . . . the Inspector

"Behind that door was a large room with an eerie, twilight atmosphere. The large windows were all covered by window shades. Men were sitting at strange drawing boards, which contained small, glowing window panes that cast their light on the faces bent over them."

had whiskers, and all had their own individual clothing. All such details, and even the fingers on their hands, had to be inked "free-hand," and fast.

I practiced for an hour, not much more. Stallings was satisfied with my renderings, and he put me on production. He would look over my shoulder from time to time and sometimes he gave me a suggestion, but on the whole he approved of my work.

"My animator" was seated when La Cava introduced us to one another. He remained seated while giving me instructions and explanations. In mid-morning, he sat back, put down his pencil, yawned, stretched and started to stand up. I thought he would never stop rising. He kept going up and up, and when he was fully UP, I found myself staring up at the tallest chap I had ever seen. I realized later that my seated position and the complete surprise of it all added to the impression of his super height, but George was really quite tall . . . six feet three or four.

Hearst International, one of William Randolph Hearst's many enterprises, occupied the sixteenth floor of a building devoted to the film industry. To this day, that building is still occupied by offices of motion picture production.

In a short time, I got to know the layout of our floor. Besides the animation studio's "bull pen," with its partitioned-off room for La Cava, there was a small, separate room for a sort of independent animator named Frank Moser. He animated "Happy Hooligan." Some years later, for a time, he shared an animation studio (Moser-Terry, Inc.) with Paul Terry.

On our floor was a screening room with comfortable, plush-upholstered seats. There was also a large room for the Hearst comic-strip cartoonists; one of them was George McManus, of "Bringing Up Father" fame.

As my first day progressed, I got to know some of the other people in the studio, and before the week was over I knew them all, at least by name. To name a few: John Terry, the brother of Paul Terry of Terrytoons; Walter Lantz, who later became a famous producer of animated cartoons; and Burt Gillett, who later directed Walt Disney's "Three Little Pigs." One of the girls was named Irma; several years later, she became Mrs. Paul Terry.

To get back to the drawing board: at first I just inked the drawings one after the other without relating one to the other, but as I gained confidence I began to examine the drawings to see what made them "move." I flipped them through my fingers as the animator did. I put several drawings on the light-board and switched on the light. I saw that animation was not only in the drawing but also in the **spacing**—close spacing for slow action and wider spacing for fast action.

As the days progressed, I inked other characters that were being animated at the studio. They were all from such

Hearst newspaper comic strips as "Happy Hooligan" and "Gloomy Gus" by Opper and "Silk Hat Harry" and "Judge Rummy" by Tad.

Frank Moser, as I have mentioned, animated "Happy Hooligan," and I did some inking for him, although I never was asked to pick up the work from his own animation room. My first assignment came about when I met Moser as I was coming out of the men's room. He suddenly said: "I have a scene for you to ink. I will bring it to your desk." I asked La Cava about this, and he said for me to go ahead and ink it. I did, after finishing a scene for George. The Moser animation was of a wave-swell in mid-ocean, with a drowning Happy Hooligan being carried along with the wave. I admired the realism of the action when I flipped the drawings through my fingers. Simple drawing and good spacing. This was something new for me to study. Before, everything was cartoon people in action, walking, running, jumping and so forth. Now I knew that Nature could be animated.

I have spoken of the comfortable screening room on our floor. It turned out that the animation studio made use of it. The very day that I started working there, we were all called into that room at lunch time and treated to a screening of a Katzenjammer Kids animated cartoon. It was a treat to me, at any rate, to be one of a small group of privileged people previewing a motion picture in a private theater. An additional comfort was eating my lunch while enjoying the film.

My lunch consisted of large sandwiches of cheese or meat or perhaps sardines between thick slices of rye bread. I guess the crumbs fell helter skelter as I chewed away while earnestly watching the action on the screen. These screenings took place once or twice a week. After my second or perhaps third week at the studio, and after several cartoon screenings, Gregory La Cava, with a big grin on his face, said to me: "I don't think Mr. Hearst would approve your decorating the rug of his private projection room with crumbs from your delicious sandwiches." Then he added: "I don't think Marion Davies would, either." I took the hint and ate my lunch after the screenings.

I continued to commute from Newark, carrying my sandwiches and a book to read on the way. My walk up Broadway continued along the same route, but the "Oh Lady, Lady" sign read "Fourth Month" and then "Fifth Month."

One day, Frank Moser gave me a scene to ink of a cow walking. I flipped the drawings. The movement was smooth but looked wrong to me. I turned to an inker sitting next to me and asked if he could see anything wrong with the action. He flipped it himself and answered, "No." I pointed out that this cow was walking by raising both legs on one side of her body and stepping forward, then raising both legs on the other side. I explained that animals walk by alternating their legs, moving a left foreleg and a right hind leg, then a right foreleg and a left hind leg.

It seemed wrong to ink an action that was incorrect. I took the drawings into La Cava's office, flipped the pictures and gave him my explanation of the alternating leg action of animals. He also flipped the drawings and laughed out loud. Then he told me to do the inking as Moser wanted it done. I walked back to my desk thinking that La Cava thought I was a smart-aleck kid who had stepped out of line.

The next day, La Cava stopped at my desk and asked me if I would like to try animating a scene on my own. I was surprised, but without further thought I said, "Yes." La Cava gave me a scene that had been started by Nate Collier, one of the animators. In it, a duck dressed in clothes was to walk up a road in perspective, getting smaller as he progressed. Collier had animated the duck's first step.

I was given a small stack of animation paper, one pencil and a light bulb for my animation board. (I had no need for the inside-the-board light while I was inking.) I was now on my own.

I studied the one step that the animator had drawn; it consisted of seven drawings. I animated as Stallings would have, by drawing every seventh position and then drawing the in-between positions. (Later, in the development of the "belt-line" system of animation, the in-between drawings were done by assistants and "in-betweeners.") Of course, I inked my own scene. I can safely say that my duck walk receding in perspective was no masterpiece, but it was used in the picture.

George Stallings told me how he became an animator and how he did **not** start a studio of his own. I think the story is worth repeating.

Stallings was from Atlanta, Georgia, and about five years earlier, in 1912 or 1913, he had attended a vaudeville show in Atlanta with "Gertie the Dinosaur" on the program. "Gertie" was the first fully animated, realistic cartoon. Its creator, Winsor McCay, appeared on the stage during the screening of the cartoon. He had timed the cartoon action so that the animated dinosaur seemed to respond to his instructions. It was a great novelty act.

George was young and ambitious, and he went backstage after the act was over and talked with Winsor McCay. It was easy to get information from McCay, who acted like a proud papa boasting about his wonderful baby. George Stallings received from him a complete course on how to make an animated cartoon. One must remember that in the pre-sound days, there was no need for sound tracks or any form of synchronization, or any complicated technical knowedge.

George had taken a correspondence-school cartooning course, and felt confident about his cartooning ability. So, with his newly acquired animation knowledge, he got down to work. He did not tell me how long it took, but after a period of time he had finished a short animated cartoon—drawn, photographed and on film.

Armed with the cartoon in a film can, George took a train to New York to set himself up as a producer of animated cartoons. He figured he would ask a New York cartoon producer how to go about opening such a studio. After all, he had learned how to make a cartoon film just by asking.

George snooped around and located the most prominent animation studio in New York. It might have been the only studio, or at the most, one of only two or three such studios. The cartoonist-producer gave George a very pleasant welcome and expressed admiration for his film, but was free with advice in an unexpected direction. He told George that if he went into the animation business he would be in legal trouble, because he, the producer, owned all the patents on the animation processes. George was stunned. The blow was softened by an offer of a job as an animator. George took the job.

George told me about this experience in his slow, Southern way of talking. Then, after a long pause, George added: "I found out later that this man had told me a big lie. Nobody at that time owned any patents on any animation process."

I might add that while the man who told him that lie is now dead, his studio is still doing business in New York.

To get back to my career, my duck-walk animation was followed by another assignment, to animate a group of policemen running across the screen. That came out rather well. I also continued to ink for Stallings and Moser.

On July 6, 1918, as we were given our pay envelopes, we were told that the studio was folding as of that very day. It was a shock, this abrupt ending of my new career.

Of course, my animation career did not end with the closing of the Hearst International studio. Two weeks later, I was working at Bud Fisher's studio on "Mutt and Jeff" animated cartoons.

END

UB IWERKS, 1901-1971

A quiet man who left a deep mark on animation

By DAVID R. SMITH

Ub Iwerks was born on March 24, 1901, in Kansas City, Missouri. His name at birth was Ubbe Ert Iwwerks; it was not until he was in his twenties that he shortened it to Ub Iwerks.

Ub's father, Ert Ubbe Iwwerks, had emigrated from Holland to the United States, where he met and married Laura May Wagoner of Kansas City. Ert was a barber, except for four years as a photographer. For many years, the family lived at 2336 Hardesty Avenue in Kansas City.

Ub attended Ashland Grammar School, where he graduated in 1914. Soon after, he obtained a job as an apprentice with the Union Bank Note Company, where he worked while attending classes at Northeast High School. Ub left high school in 1916 to work full-time for the bank note company until 1917. In 1918, he spent some time working on a farm at Scotland, Arkansas.

In 1919, Ub was eighteen years old. He was good at lettering and had decided he wanted to get into the commercial art field. Luck was with him, for in September 1919, he was hired to do lettering and air-brush work for the Pesmen-Rubin Commercial Art Studio, located in the Gray Advertising Building at Fourteenth and Oak in Kansas City. Louis Pesmen remembers being impressed by Ub's samples. "He was a fantastic lettering man," Pesmen recalls, "so Rubin and I hired him immediately." At first, Ub received fifteen dollars a week. It was at the Pesmen-Rubin Studio that Ub met Walt Disney, an aspiring artist who was only eight months his junior. After the pre-Christmas rush, both Ub and Walt were laid off. Walt was laid off first, and bided his time carrying Christmas mail. In his spare time, he dreamed of setting up his own art agency. When Ub was laid off in January 1920, the two eighteen-year-old boys got together to discuss the future. It was then that they decided to go into business for themselves.

Walt and Ub opened a small office at Thirty-first and Holmes, and went searching for work. A boyhood pal of Walt's named Walt Pfeiffer got them a job doing lettering for the UNITED LEATHER WORKERS JOURNAL through his father, who was an officer in the union. Walt also visited Al Carter, a neighbor of his who owned a restaurant and put out a paper called THE RESTAURANT NEWS. Carter hired the boys to do lettering and drawing for him.

The Iwerks-Disney Studio lasted for only about a month. As early as January 29, Walt had seen a notice in the Kansas City STAR that an artist was needed by the Kansas City Slide Company, and when he applied, he was accepted for the position. Ub kept the studio going for a few weeks, but he was unsuccessful as a salesman. So he called Walt, who got him a job at the Slide Company, beginning in March. Ub did lettering, animation, and even an occasional live-action acting chore. The company soon moved from its Central Street address to a building at 2449 Charlotte, changing its name to the Kansas City Film Ad Company and later the United Film Ad Company. It was with this company that Ub and Walt got their first real exposure to animation.

When Walt Disney left the Film Ad Company in 1922 to form his own company, Ub joined him. Walt incorporated his Laugh-o-Gram company on May 23, 1922, to make cartoon films. Besides Ub, the staff members included Hugh Harman, Walt Pfeiffer, Nadine Simpson, Adolph Kloepper, Rudolf Ising, Carmen Maxwell, and Lorey L. Tague.

Ub worked for Laugh-o-Grams from November 4, 1922, to May 5, 1923, at a salary of fifty dollars a week. This sum on paper and the feel of money in the pocket were two different things, as Ub soon found out. Of the thirteen hundred dollars due him for his work, only two hundred ninety-seven dollars was paid before the company went bankrupt. Walt had sold a series of modernized fairy tale cartoons to a New York firm called Pictorial Clubs, but it went bankrupt before it could pay Laugh-o-Grams anything, and this caused Walt's fledgling company to go bankrupt, too. Shortly before the receivers took over, however, Walt, Ub, and the other artists made one innovative film, "Alice's Wonderland," with a live-action girl acting alongside cartoon animals. A little girl named Virginia Davis was hired as the actress, and Walt, Ub, Hugh, Rudy, and Carmen all appeared in the film with her.

After the company went into bankruptcy, Walt left Kansas City for Hollywood in the summer of 1923, getting permission from the receivers to take "Alice's Wonderland" with him as a sample of his work. Ub returned to his old job at the United Film Ad Company. His salary was the same fifty dollars a week, but it was really paid, this time. (After four years, the Laugh-o-Gram bankruptcy case was settled, and Ub received forty-five cents on the dollar of the amount due him.)

Meanwhile, Walt Disney, out in Hollywood, sold his "Alice" cartoon idea to a distributor, Miss M. J. Winkler, in October 1923. He immediately began work on the series, doing much of the animation for the first six films himself. But the pressures were mounting, and he needed more help. The first call went out, early in 1924, to Ub Iwerks. Walt's powers of persuasion worked, and Ub agreed to move to California.

On June 1, 1924, Walt wrote to Ub, "Everything is going fine with us and I am glad you have made up your mind to come out. Boy, you will never regret it—this is the place for you—a real country to work and play in." He continued, "I can give you a job as artist-cartoonist and etc. with the Disney Productions, most of the work would be cartooning. Answer at once and let me know what you want to start . . . At the present time I have one fellow helping me on the animation and three girls that do the inking etc. while Roy [Walt's elder brother] handles the business end."

Virginia Davis, who had acted in the first Alice comedy in Kansas City, had been brought to Hollywood by her parents so she could continue her film career. Walt told Mr. Davis that Ub would be coming to California, and Davis had a suggestion. He had left his car, a seven-passenger Cadillac, in Kansas City. If Ub would drive it out, Davis would pay for all the gas, oil, and upkeep. Davis assured Ub that it was a good car—an old model, but with very few miles on it

Ub agreed, by return mail, to drive the car, for Walt wrote again on June 10 with details. Ub was to start about two weeks later. Walt said it would take him

Ub Iwerks at his drawing board, circa 1929. Copyright © Walt Disney Productions.

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Courtesy of Carl Stalling and the Bob Clampett Collection

The first page of Ub Iwerks' original story sketches for "The Skeleton Dance," the first Silly Symphony (1929).

about ten days for the trip. Walt proudly wrote, "Our Big Boss, M. J. Winkler, is here. Arrived a week ago last Saturday and we have been making arrangements with them for the future. We are trying in every way to improve our pictures and intend to make them the most popular single reel on the market. I suppose you know that M. J. Winkler handles 'Felix the Cat,' and used to handle 'Out of the Inkwell,' but dropped it for our stuff."

It took Ub a little longer than he had expected to sell his furniture and his car and otherwise wind up his affairs in Kansas City, so he was not able to leave until about the middle of July. He had a fine trip, making it in only seven days, with very little trouble. Walt, in an August 4 letter to Dr. Thomas B. McCrum, a dentist in Kansas City for whom the boys had made the film "Tommy Tucker's Tooth" in December 1922, wrote, "Ubbe has been with us now for over a week and we are certainly making use of him . . . He has bought a big Cole Eight roadster. After driving a big car, he couldn't go back to a small one."

Ub started out at forty dollars a week, and almost from the beginning, he was paid more than anyone else on the staff, including Walt. His salary was raised to fifty dollars on January 10, 1925; fifty-five dollars on May 8; sixty dollars on September 12, and seventy dollars on October 16, 1926. Ub immediately began animating on the Alice cartoons, and also drew lobby cards and posters to publicize the series. With the advent of the "Oswald, the Lucky Rabbit" series in 1927, Ub's salary moved in steps from seventy dollars to one hundred twenty dollars a week in just two months' time.

It was early in 1928 that Walt discovered that he was losing his Oswald character and that his animators were being signed away by Charles Mintz, who was by then handling the business for Miss Winkler. Ub, however, remained faithful, and signed a contract on March 2, 1928. Walt began searching quietly for other animators, without letting his existing staff become aware that he knew they were going to desert him. He got in touch with Bill Nolan, who was working on the "Krazy Kat" series, and wrote to Roy from New York on March 5, "I believe I could get some dandy stuff with Ubb and Bill and present assistants . . . Bill seems to think he and Ubbe would make a good team." Nolan, however, got a better offer from Mintz, for he joined Walter Lantz on the Oswald series.

Beginning on March 24, 1928, Ub began putting money into the business with the Disney brothers; first twenty dollars, and later thirty-five dollars a week was withheld from his salary to be applied toward a twenty per cent interest in the partnership.

With Oswald lost, Walt needed a new character. Many stories have been circulated on the birth of Mickey Mouse, and Walt himself used to embroider on these tales. When Walt returned to Hollywood from New York, he, Ub, and other loyal members of the staff met in secret to discuss the new character. Out of these discussions, in April 1928, emerged Mickey Mouse, with Ub mostly responsible for his design and Walt for making him come alive, by giving him his personality. Also out of these meetings came the first story, a takeoff on Lindbergh. It is sometimes said that Ub was the real "father" of Mickey Mouse, but Ub would never admit this.

Ub was given the job of animating the first Mickey Mouse cartoon, "Plane Crazy," all by himself. He began the last week of April 1928, and by the second week of May the cels were ready to be painted. Ub animated at tremendous speed—seven hundred drawings in one day. "I've always had a competitive nature," he recalled. "I'd heard that Bill Nolan, who was doing 'Krazy Kat,' had done five hundred or six hundred drawings a day, so I really extended myself."

At first, work was done in secret, since the other animators had not yet left, nor had the final Oswald films in Walt's contract been completed. Ub was an outcast; he worked in a locked room, with dummy work around so that he could make a quick switch if anyone came in. Days and nights he worked. Walt put three benches in his garage at his home on Lyric Avenue, and Hazel Sewell (Walt's sister-in-law), Walt's wife, and Roy's wife were the inkers and painters. Mike Marcus was the cameraman, shooting the film at night after the animators had gone home. The picture was finally completed and it was previewed at a theater at Sunset and Gardner in Hollywood on May 15, 1928. The organist had been coached to ac-

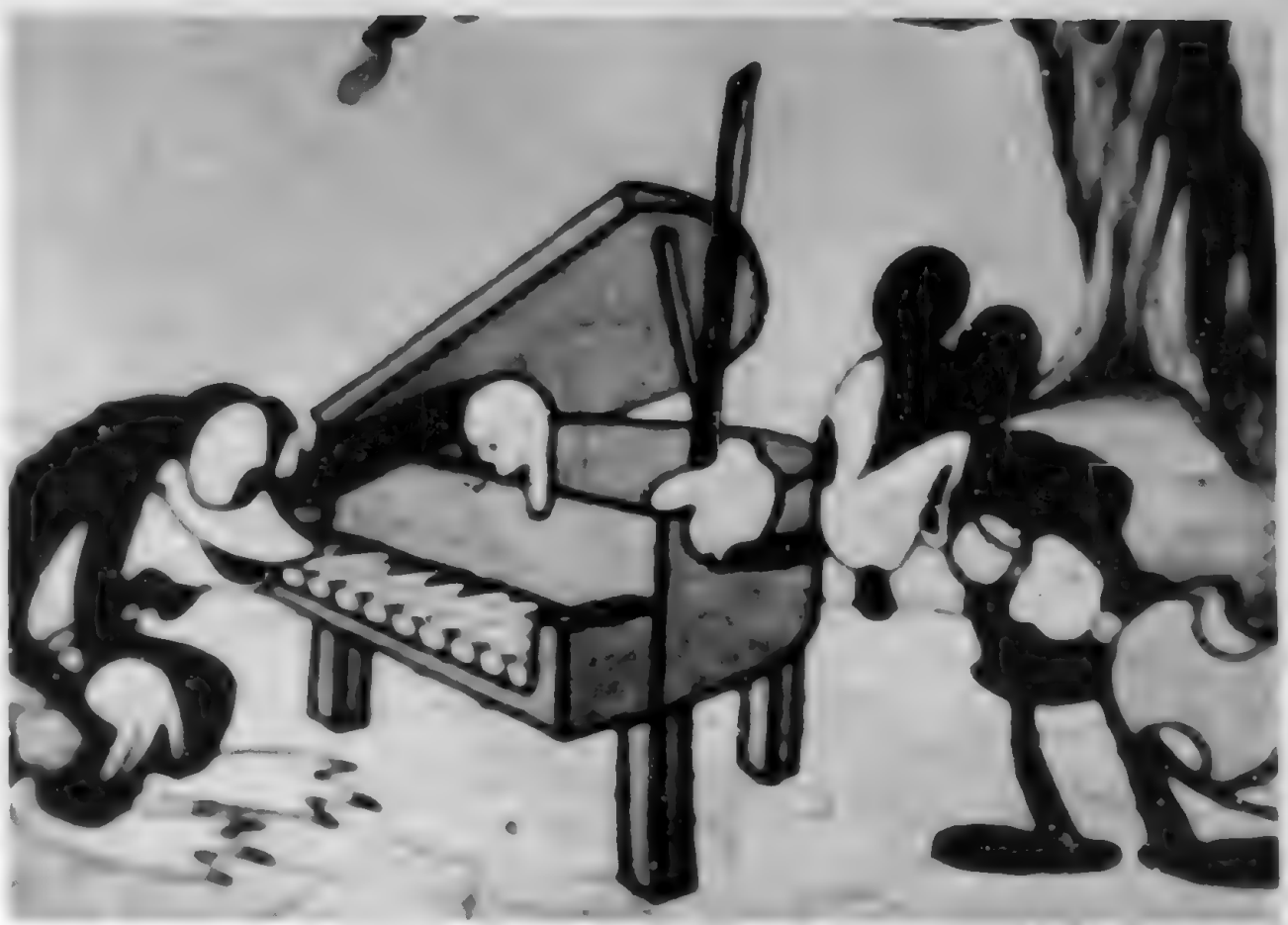
company the action, and the picture got quite a few laughs.

Almost immediately work began on the second Mickey cartoon, "Gallopin' Gaucho." A gag party was held on May 29. Ub animated the entire film, and it was ready for preview on August 28. But, while 'Gallopin' Gaucho" was in work, Walt realized that it was going to be almost impossible to sell a series of silent cartoons. Distributors just were not interested. Jolson's "The Jazz Singer" had come out the previous October, and synchronized sound was now the rage.

Walt and Ub, along with others in the animation field, were worried about whether audiences would really accept synchronized sound cartoons. Could they be made to believe that drawings were actually making sounds?

In July, before "Gallopin' Gaucho" was completed, Ub was asked to animate the first scene of "Steamboat Willie." Walt had sent out for some sheet music of "Steamboat Bill," an old vaudeville song that was to be used in the picture. Wilfred Jackson, a young animator, could play the harmonica, and with the help of a metronome, he and Walt worked out the timing they wanted.

Then came the big night. The opening scenes, animated by Ub, had been put on a loop of film. Roy stationed himself outside a window of the studio on Hyperion Avenue with a projector (so the projector noise would not be heard). Ub had rigged up a microphone and a speaker, and the speaker was placed behind the bedsheet that was being used as a screen. Johnny Cannon was there—he could make funny sounds with his voice; Ub and Les Clark were there with sound effects, and Walt did Mickey's voice. In the audience were Ub's wife, Roy's wife, Walt's wife, Hazel Sewell, and Jackson's sweetheart, Jane Ames. Walt and the boys ran the film over and over, trying to perfect the timing of the sound effects with the action on the screen. The animators, if not the captive audience, were fascinated with the results. Each of the men took turns going out in front of the screen to watch. Ub recalled: "It was wonderful; there was no precedent of any kind. I've never been so thrilled in my life. Nothing since has ever equalled it. That evening proved that an idea could be made to work."



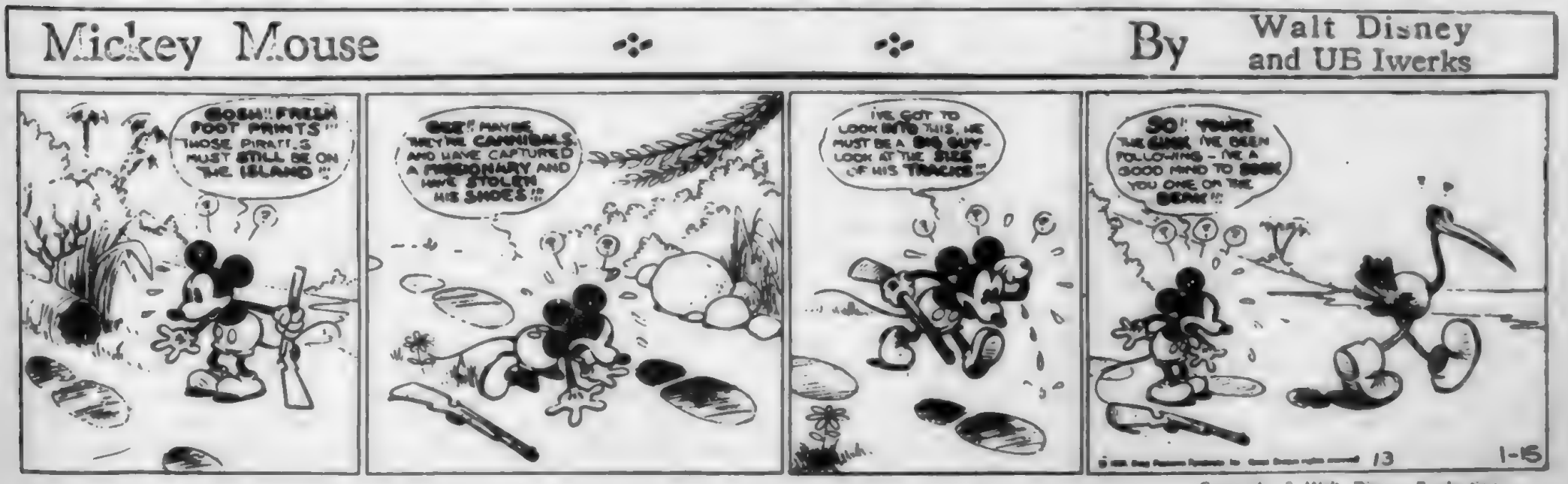
Courtesy of Courtlandt Hull and Gerald Haber

Flip the Frog and friend (a most Mickey-ish mouse) in one of Ub Iwerks' first cartoons on his own, "Fiddlesticks" (1931). "Fiddlesticks" may have been the first Flip cartoon; it was at least the first to be copyrighted.

Work continued on "Steamboat Willie" and a silent negative and print were made. Walt took the film to New York in September to get the sound recorded. Later, sound was added to the first two Mickeys, and to the fourth, "The Barn Dance." It was with the fifth Mickey cartoon, "The Opry House," released early in 1929, that the use of sound with cartoons was really perfected.

Early in 1929, Walt and Carl Stalling, the studio's music director, got an idea for a new series of cartoons, with the drawings made to fit the music. Animation, under Ub, began in January 1929. Walt wrote to Ub from New York on February 9, "I am glad the spook dance is progressing so nicely—give her Hell, Ubbe—make it funny and I feel sure we will be able to place it in a good way. I have them all worked up and raring to see it—so we can't disappoint them. We have a score to it. The music sounds like a little symphony. I feel positive everything will fit the picture properly. If it doesn't, it is possible we might fix the cartoon action to fit, but judging by the way the 'Opry House' fit, I feel positive it will be great."

The film, "The Skeleton Dance," was completed in March 1929, and a preview was held on March 20 at Bard's Theater at Sunset and Hillhurst. The audience seemed greatly amused, but


Mickey Mouse
By Walt Disney and UB Iwerks
GOSH!! FRESH FOOT PRINTS!! THOSE PIRATES MUST STILL BE ON THE ISLAND!!
GEE!! MAYBE THEY'RE CANNIBALS AND HAVE CAPTURED A MISSIONARY AND HAVE STOLEN HIS SHOES!!
I'VE GOT TO LOOK INTO THIS, HE MUST BE A BIG GUY - LOOK AT THE SIZE OF HIS TRACKS!!
SO!! YOU'RE THE GUY I'VE BEEN FOLLOWING - I'VE A GOOD MIND TO BOOK YOU ONE ON THE BEAK!!
13
1-15

Copyright © Walt Disney Productions

One of the first Mickey Mouse newspaper strips; the strip was drawn by Ub Iwerks from its beginning on January 1, 1930, until February 8, 1930, by which time Iwerks and the Disneys had parted company. Another artist inked Iwerks' pencil drawings.

Copyright © Walt Disney Productions

Ub Iwerks in November 1940, working on effects for the Disney feature "The Reluctant Dragon."

Walt scratched his head and asked Ub, "Are they laughing at us or with us?"

Walt and his New York distributors were extremely pleased with Ub's animation on the Mickey cartoons. In February 1929, Walt wrote to his wife from New York, "Everyone praised Ubb's art work and jokes at his funny name. The oddness of Ubb's name is an asset in a way—it makes people look twice when they see it. Tell Ubbe that the New York animators take off their hats to his animation and all of them know who we are." This last phrase was most likely a key one—here were Walt and Ub, upstart young animators, making cartoons in Hollywood, and the New York animators, the pioneers in the business, "all of them know who we are." It was a great boost for Walt's and Ub's egos.

Details of Ub's participation in the early Mickeys and Silly Symphonies are practically nonexistent, but Les Clark recalls that Ub animated all of "The Skeleton Dance" except for the first scene, which Les animated. In fact, Wilfred Jackson remembers that Ub was the only true animator that Walt had until a group of New York animators, led by Ben Sharpsteen, arrived early in the spring of 1929. Although Jackson, Johnny Cannon and Les Clark were members of the Disney staff at that time, they were basically still in-betweeners. Ben Sharpsteen recalls that his first work was on "The Cat's Away," the sixth Mickey cartoon, so all of the first five would have been mainly Ub's work.

Ub also worked on the layouts of the early Mickeys and Sillys, with Walt supplying the story outlines. It would be difficult to describe either man as the "director" of the early cartoons; Ben Sharpsteen believes that the word probably should not be used in connection with those films. The division of responsibilities simply evolved over the months. Soon after Burt Gillett came to the studio in April 1929, he was given the major responsibility for the Mickeys, but it is doubtful that even he could have been termed their "director" at that stage. Ben Sharpsteen remembers that in the summer of 1929, Walt pulled Ub, Wilfred Jackson, and Les Clark off other projects and isolated them to work on a group of Silly Symphonies dealing with the seasons (the first was "Springtime").

Throughout this period, the other animators looked to Ub for a certain amount of leadership, because they realized that he had been responsible for much of the "style" of the Disney characters in the early cartoons. Ub also acted as a sort of go-between for the animators and Walt.

But Ub began having minor run-ins with Walt early in 1929. The first problem was over exposure sheets. Walt would take Ub's drawings at night and prepare exposure sheets for them, timing them any way he wanted. Ub frequently complained that the timing Walt settled on was not what he had visualized. Finally, Walt agreed to let Ub do the timing of the action himself.

A second problem arose during work on "The Skeleton Dance." Ub, in animating the skeletons, worked on every drawing. He didn't follow what is the standard practice today and do only the most important drawings, leaving the rest to be filled in by the in-betweeners. Instead, he animated as the early animators did, drawing the skeletons "in rough" and letting the other artists fill in the ribs and other details. Walt and Ub had a rumpus over this. Walt wanted Ub to use the in-between method; Ub argued that he would lose the flow of the action if he did. He said that he got a better feeling for the action if he animated "straight ahead" and left only the details to be filled in. Walt could never accept this method.

Finally, Ub was approached by Pat Powers, who urged him to leave Walt and open a studio of his own, with Powers' backing. Powers, through his Celebrity Productions, distributed Walt's earliest Mickey cartoons, and it was Powers' "outlaw" Cinephone process that Walt had used for recording the soundtracks of his cartoons. However, at the time Powers approached Ub, Walt was ending his relationship with Powers and preparing to switch to a new distributor. Powers offered Ub a contract that called for three hundred dollars a week, a lot more than Ub was getting from the Disneys.

Walt was in New York when Ub went in to see Roy on the morning of January 21, 1930. He informed Roy that he was withdrawing from the partnership as soon as possible, giving as his reasons the personal differences between Walt and himself. Ub's interest in the partnership was a participating interest—it ceased when his active connection with the company ended. So, the next day, Roy signed an agreement drawn up by the Disneys' attorney, Gunther Lessing. Roy agreed to pay Ub two thousand, nine hundred twenty dollars within one year in exchange for Ub's release, whereby Ub assigned and transferred "all of his right, title, and interest whatsoever that right, title or interest might be in and to the business of producing animated cartoon motion pictures, sound recording, comic strips, and all associated business" conducted by Walt Disney Productions. Ub accepted the money as full settlement and reimbursement for all amounts he had invested in the business, and also tendered his resignation as a director and as vice president and treasurer of the Disney Film Recording Company.

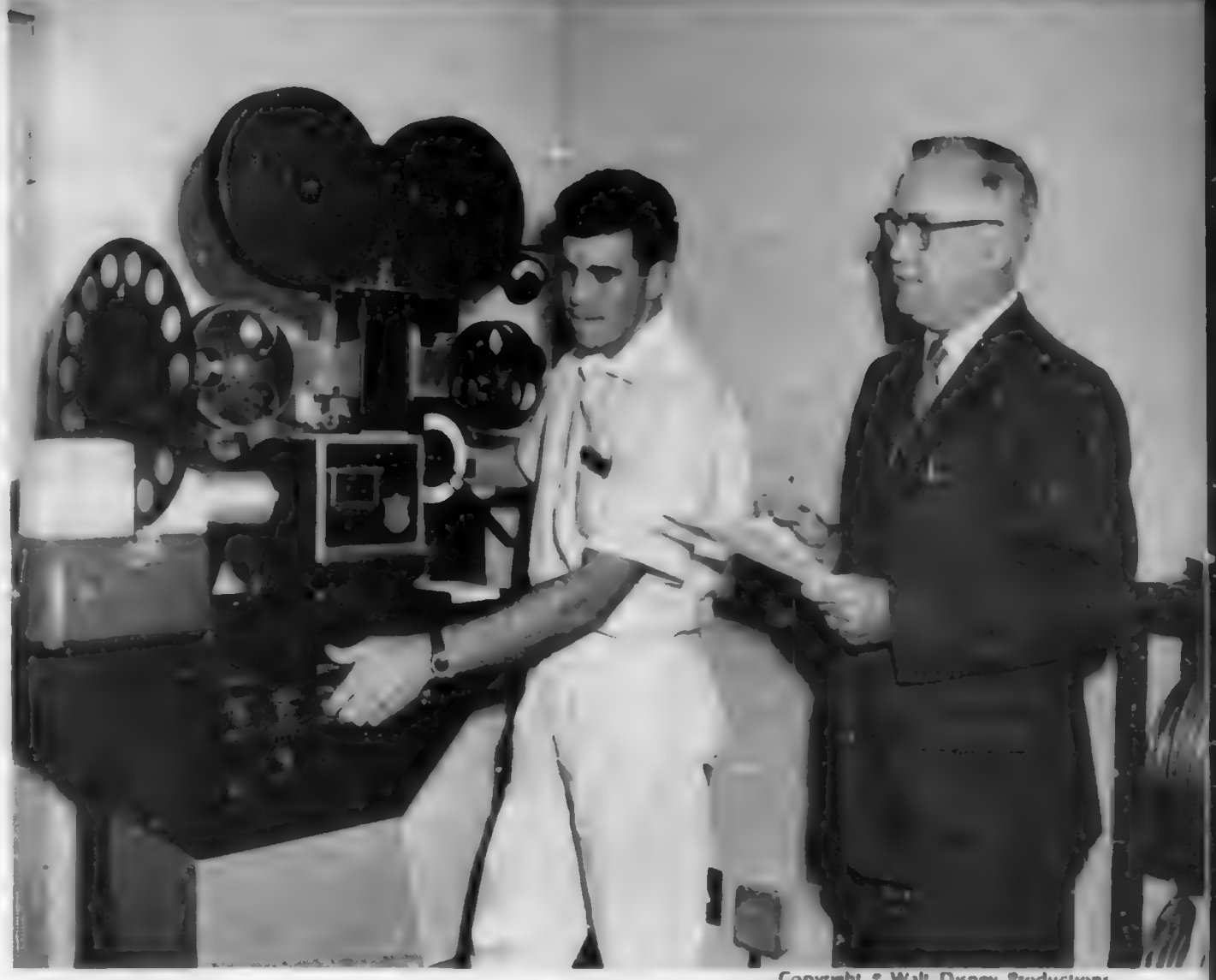
Feelings were naturally a little hurt, on both sides, at this parting of the ways. Ub had not realized how much his departure would hurt the Disneys; he was their best animator, and he was leaving them. On January 25, Roy had a long talk with Ub, who had not ad-

mitted at first that Powers was behind his leaving. Ub told Roy that the whole thing had been represented to him as having no connection with the Disneys nor affecting them in the least. Roy wrote to Walt, "Not trying to excuse Ub, but just trying to size it up all the way around, I believe Ub at the start meant O.K., and I am sure that right now, even though he won't admit it, he regrets very much the outcome."

After leaving the Disneys, Ub set up his own studio, under the name of the Ub Iwerks Studio. On the first Sunday in March, he placed a newspaper ad asking artists to bring their samples on March 5 to the upstairs studio in a building on Western Avenue, just south of Santa Monica Boulevard. The Great Depression had begun, and so a line of seventy-five to a hundred people stretched from the office down into the building's courtyard. One of the men standing in this line was Fred Kopietz, a young commercial artist. When he got to the head of the line, Ub looked through his portfolio of life drawings and samples of commercial artwork, and then ushered him back through the animators' room to his office. "When would you like to start work?" Ub asked. He explained that he had been looking for two people; the first, Tony Pabian, had already been hired. The second was Fred. The tiny staff already included a camera operator and several girls for inking and painting. The starting sa.ary for Ub's animators was a mere twenty to twenty-five dollars a week.

Ub's character was a frog. Originally, Pat Powers' Celebrity Productions, represented by Charlie Giegerich, wanted to call him "Tony Frog." Giegerich wrote to Ub on February 11, 1930, "The name of 'Tony Frog' would indicate a snappy sort of individual and consisting of but two words, it more readily fits on theatre marquees." Ub, on the other hand, wanted the name "Flip the Frog." Regarding this name, Giegerich wrote, "the general consensus seems to be that it is something of a tongue-twister. As a matter of fact, I personally have difficulty in pronouncing the words 'Flip the Frog' without lapsing into a lisp. Try it out on a number of people and see how many can pronounce the sentence without stumbling."

Despite Giegerich's lisp, "Flip the Frog" was chosen, and Ub proceeded to make thirty-six Flip cartoons over the next few years, for MGM release. The first few films were not especially good. Roy Disney wrote to Walt on April 26, 1930, "I hear considerable about 'Flip the Frog.' Powers isn't even trying to sell it now. He is waiting for a **good** picture. They were all very disappointed with the first." The Flip character was slowly changed until he looked more like a little boy, and he then became more popular.



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Ub Iwerks and his son Dave in 1956.

Late in 1930, Ub moved his studio to 9713 Santa Monica Boulevard, in Beverly Hills, where he continued with Flip the Frog. In 1933, he began a series about a boy, Willie Whopper, who was an accomplished liar. The name of the company was changed to the Animated Pictures Corporation. In 1934, Ub began a series of films called ComiColor cartoons; since Disney had exclusive rights to the three-color Technicolor process, another color process was used. These films were copyrighted by Celebrity Productions, Pat Powers' organization.

Early in 1936, Ub's company shut down temporarily. It was only a brief hiatus, and Ub soon reopened his studio as Cartoon Films Limited. He directed two Porky Pig cartoons for Warner Brothers, made some advertising films, and did extensive work on the development of a new character called Gran-pop for an English backer. In 1938, he moved to a new studio at 1704 Santa Monica Boulevard, where he worked on the Color Rhapsody series for Columbia.

During this time, Ub maintained his early interest in the technology behind film animation. After he secured the services of top-flight animators, such as Grim Natwick, he would leave the running of the studio to them and spend hours in a machine shop working on refinements in the cameras. He even developed, early in the 1930s, a prototype of the multiplane camera; it was horizontal, rather than vertical like the later Disney version.

On September 9, 1940, Ub returned to Walt Disney Productions in the Production Control Department. He had finally made his break from the drawing end of animation to spend his time with his first love—technical processes. One of his first tasks was to work on special photographic effects for the feature film "The Reluctant Dragon." He also designed and built the first multi-head optical printer, making possible the combinations of live action and animation in "The Three Caballeros." Later development of this optical printer was responsible for the intricate combinations of live action and animation in "Mary Poppins" and "Bedknobs and Broomsticks."

On September 11, 1943, Ub was given the responsibility for the creative and technical direction of the new Optical Printing Department. In 1945, he was named development engineer, reporting directly to Walt Disney. As such, he was responsible for developing new techniques to handle production requirements and for improving upon existing techniques, with the aim of reducing costs. His work was soon expanded, under the title of head of the Special Processes and Camera Department. And, finally, in 1958, his title was changed to studio technical research director, a position that he held until his death on July 7, 1971.

Ub no longer animated after returning to the Disney studio, but unbeknown to most people, he slipped in at least one drawing in every picture he worked on. For example, he did the art work for a coral reef in a process shot in "20,000

(Continued on Page 47.)

PART EIGHT OF THE

CARL BARKS BIBLIOGRAPHY

BY MIKE BARRIER

III. Gold Key Comic Books (Continued)

A. WALT DISNEY'S COMICS AND STORIES (Cont.)

348 (29/12) - September 1969 - 36 pages

DONALD DUCK - 10 - **Reprinted** from WALT DISNEY'S COMICS No. 155, August 1953.

349 - (30/1) - October 1969 - 36 pages

DONALD DUCK - 10 - **Reprinted** from WALT DISNEY'S COMICS No. 92, May 1948.

CHANGES: The panels on the first page have been trimmed in the reprint to make room for the indicia at the bottom of the page.

350 (30/2) - November 1969 - 36 pages

Front cover: On a ship's deck, Donald looks sick as the nephews gorge themselves on candy, fruit, ice cream and a hamburger. (Art only.)

DONALD DUCK - 10 - **Reprinted** from WALT DISNEY'S COMICS No. 133, October 1951

CHANGES: The panels on the first page have been trimmed in the reprint to make room for the indicia at the bottom of the page.

351 (30/3) - December 1969 - 36 pages

This issue and the January issue were published in both fifteen-cent and twenty-five-cent editions; the twenty-five-cent editions contain posters.

Front cover: The nephews and a nervous turkey hide as Donald, in pilgrim garb and carrying a musket, walks by. (Art only.)

DONALD DUCK - 10 - **Reprinted** from WALT DISNEY'S COMICS No. 147, December 1952.

352 (30/4) - January 1970 - 36 pages

See note for WALT DISNEY'S COMICS No. 351

DONALD DUCK - 10 - **Reprinted** from WALT DISNEY'S COMICS No. 160, January 1954.

353 (30/5) - February 1970 - 36 pages

This and the following seven issues, through No. 360, September 1970, were published only as twenty-five-cent comic books, all containing posters.

DONALD DUCK - 10 - **Reprinted** from WALT DISNEY'S COMICS No. 173, February 1955.

354 (30/6) - March 1970 - 36 pages

See note for WALT DISNEY'S COMICS No. 353

DONALD DUCK - 10 - **Reprinted** from WALT DISNEY'S COMICS No. 197, February 1957.

355 (30/7) - April 1970 - 36 pages

See note for WALT DISNEY'S COMICS No. 353.

Front cover: **Reprinted** from the front cover of WALT DISNEY'S COMICS No. 161, February 1954.

DONALD DUCK - 10 - **Reprinted** from WALT DISNEY'S COMICS No. 206, November 1957.

356 (30/8) - May 1970 - 36 pages

See note for WALT DISNEY'S COMICS No. 353.

DONALD DUCK - 10 - **Reprinted** from WALT DISNEY'S COMICS No. 103, April 1949.

CHANGES: The panels on the first page have been trimmed in the reprint to make room for the indicia at the bottom of the page.

357 (30/9) - June 1970 - 36 pages

See note for WALT DISNEY'S COMICS No. 353.

D ..LD DUCK - 10 - **Reprinted** from WALT DISNEY'S COMICS No. 145, October 1952.

CHANGES: The panels on the first page have been trimmed in the reprint to make room for the indicia at the bottom of the page.

358 (30/10) - July 1970 - 36 pages

See note for WALT DISNEY'S COMICS No. 353.

DONALD DUCK - 10 - **Reprinted** from WALT DISNEY'S COMICS No. 146, November 1952.

CHANGES: The panels on the first page have been trimmed in the reprint to make room for the indicia at the bottom of the page.

359 (30/11) - August 1970 - 36 pages

See note for WALT DISNEY'S COMICS No. 353.

DONALD DUCK - 10 - **Reprinted** from WALT DISNEY'S COMICS No. 154, July 1953.

360 (30/12) - September 1970 - 36 pages

See note for WALT DISNEY'S COMICS No. 353

DONALD DUCK - 10 - **Reprinted** from WALT DISNEY'S COMICS No. 200, May 1957.

361 (31/1) - October 1970 - 36 pages

Beginning with this issue, WALT DISNEY'S COMICS reverted to a fifteen-cent comic book.

DONALD DUCK - 10 - **Reprinted** from WALT DISNEY'S COMICS No. 158, Nove nber 1953.

362 (31/2) - November 1970 - 36 pages

DONALD DUCK - 10 - **Reprinted** from WALT DISNEY'S COMICS No. 180, September 1955.

363 (31/3) - December 1970 - 36 pages

Front cover: **Reprinted** from the front cover of WALT DISNEY'S COMICS No. 172, January 1955.

DONALD DUCK - 10 - **Reprinted** from WALT DISNEY'S COMICS No. 126, March 1951.

CHANGES: The panels on the first page have been trimmed in the reprint to make room for the indicia at the bottom of the page.

364 (31/4) - January 1971 - 36 pages

DONALD DUCK - 10 - **Reprinted** from WALT DISNEY'S

COMICS No. 172, January 1955.

365 (31/5) - February 1971 - 36 pages
DONALD DUCK - 10 - **Reprinted** from WALT DISNEY'S COMICS No. 149, February 1953.

366 (31/6) - March 1971 - 36 pages
DONALD DUCK - 10 - **Reprinted** from WALT DISNEY'S COMICS No. 150, March 1953.

367 (31/7) - April 1971 - 36 pages
DONALD DUCK - 10 - **Reprinted** from WALT DISNEY'S COMICS No. 151, April 1953.

368 (31/8) - May 1971 - 36 pages
DONALD DUCK - 10 - **Reprinted** from WALT DISNEY'S COMICS No. 156, September 1953.

369 (31/9) - June 1971 - 36 pages
DONALD DUCK - 10 - **Reprinted** from WALT DISNEY'S COMICS No. 143, August 1952.
CHANGES: The panels on the first page have been trimmed in the reprint to make room for the indicia at the bottom of the page.

370 (31/10) - July 1971 - 36 pages
DONALD DUCK - 10 - **Reprinted** from WALT DISNEY'S COMICS No. 142, July 1952.
CHANGES: The panels on the first page have been trimmed in the reprint to make room for the indicia at the bottom of the page.

371 (31/11) - August 1971 - 36 pages
DONALD DUCK - 10 - **Reprinted** from WALT DISNEY'S COMICS No. 153, June 1953.

372 (31/12) - September 1971 - 36 pages
DONALD DUCK - 10 - **Reprinted** from WALT DISNEY'S COMICS No. 168, September 1954.

373 (32/1) - October 1971 - 36 pages
DONALD DUCK - 10 - **Reprinted** from WALT DISNEY'S COMICS No. 193, October 1956.

374 (32/2) - November 1971 - 36 pages
DONALD DUCK - 10 - **Reprinted** from WALT DISNEY'S COMICS No. 203, August 1957.

375 (32/3) - December 1971 - 36 pages
DONALD DUCK The Fraidy Falcon - 10 - **Reprinted** from WALT DISNEY'S COMICS No. 240, September 1960.

376 (32/4) - January 1972 - 36 pages
DONALD DUCK - 10 - **Reprinted** from WALT DISNEY'S COMICS No. 208, January 1958.

377 (32/5) - February 1972 - 36 pages
DONALD DUCK - 10 - **Reprinted** from WALT DISNEY'S COMICS No. 185, February 1956.

378 (32/6) - March 1972 - 36 pages
DONALD DUCK - 10 - **Reprinted** from WALT DISNEY'S COMICS No. 196, January 1957.

379 (32/7) - April 1972 - 36 pages
DONALD DUCK - 10 - **Reprinted** from WALT DISNEY'S COMICS No. 207, December 1957.

380 (32/8) - May 1972 - 36 pages
DONALD DUCK - 10 - **Reprinted** from WALT DISNEY'S COMICS No. 223, April 1959.

381 (32/9) - June 1972 - 36 pages
DONALD DUCK - 10 - **Reprinted** from WALT DISNEY'S COMICS No. 202, July 1957.

3. DONALD DUCK

98 - November 1964 - 36 pages
DONALD DUCK in Secret of Hondorica - 24 - **Reprinted** from DONALD DUCK No. 46, March-April 1956.

101 - May 1965 - 36 pages
Front cover: Donald, the nephews, Scrooge and Gyro are in a small rocket ship, and Donald is fending off meteors with a ray device. (Art only.) (Illustrating "The Incredible Golden Iceberg.")

103 - September 1965 - 36 pages
Front cover: Donald and the nephews flee down a flight of stairs (apparently in an Aztec pyramid) with the Beagle Boys in hot pursuit. (Art only.) (Illustrating "The Golden Galleon.")

105 - January 1966 - 36 pages
Front cover: Donald, the nephews and Scrooge rush joyfully toward the pot of gold at the end of the rainbow—unaware that Magica de Spell is hiding in it. (Art only.) (Illustrating"The Great Rainbow Race.")

106 - March 1966 - 36 pages
Front cover: Donald uses a blanket to send up smoke signals from a scowling Indian's pipe while the nephews dance on Indian drums. (Art only.) (Illustrating "Ambush at Thunder Mountain.")
CHANGES: In Barks' original drawing, the nephew in the foreground appeared to be bouncing up and down on the drum with his bottom, instead of his feet. In the cover as published, a drawing of this nephew by another artist has been substituted for Barks' drawing, and the nephew appears to be bouncing on the drum with his feet in the substituted drawing.

111 - January 1967 - 36 pages
Front cover: Donald looks startled and the nephews flee at the sight of a huge footprint. (Art only.) (Illustrating "The Giant of Duckburg.")

117 - January 1968 - 36 pages
DONALD DUCK Pawns of the Loup Garou - 21 - Donald is a cargo pilot with secret orders to fly a crate of tools to the North Woods and pick up another crate. Unknown to Donald, Scrooge and the nephews tag along. At the rendezvous point, a panicky man fleeing from a wolf's howl takes Donald's plane. The stranded ducks open the crate the man left behind and find a half-finished gold statuette of a wolf. The statuette is stolen from them that night, and they track the thief to a mine where they are met by a huge wolf who stands on his rear legs. The ducks trap the wolf—temporarily, as it turns out—and find a girl carving on the golden statuette. They learn from her that the wolf has been hypnotized by Count Drakula—the man who stole Donald's plane—into believing that he is a werewolf. Drakula coveted the girl's mine, but fled when he began losing control of the wolf. The gold statuette, finished just in time, stops the wolf in his tracks, and the ducks return to civilization on a Mounted Police plane. (Script only.)
BARKS: When asked if his script had been edited so that the wolf in the story was not a real werewolf, Barks replied: "The thing you noticed about my 'Loup Garou' story is the sort of business I like to forget. Always there were decisions to make. Could a loup garou be a real werewolf? Could a witch be a real witch? How far can I stretch the ridiculous without getting in trouble with the office? How far can I push pure fantasy before some sophisticated 5-year-old kid complains that Donald Duck is only a fairy tale character like Hans C. Andersen's people? I leaned toward logical explanations of phenomenons in everyday terms and mechanics—just to be safe. I hate to go back into those old stories and relive the struggles I had trying to make the ex-

planations interesting and funny and not a dull let-down. Man! How I feel about a kid who yearns to make a career of writing and drawing comics—better, I say, he should take up something exalting and invigorating like sewer engineering." January 23, 1968, letter to Mike Barrier.

126 - July 1969 - 36 pages

Front cover: Donald, a policeman, writes a ticket on a nephew's bicycle while a Beagle Boy walks out of a bank with a sack of money.

DONALD DUCK Officer for a Day - 14 - Donald, as a substitute policeman, takes over when Duckburg's regular police are felled by the Asian flu and the Hong Kong flu. Donald is treed by the Purgatory Cherubs motorcycle gang and is foiled by legal technicalities when he tries to stop the Beagle Boys from burglarizing a bank. Then a flying saucer lands, and Donald's efforts to combat the spacemen end in humiliation—but both the motorcycle gang and the Beagle Boys are routed by the spacemen, and Duckburg returns to normal, this time with the nephews as its police. (Script only.)

BARKS: "I did a 14-page Donald Duck **script** for Chase [Craig] a few weeks ago. He now wants me to do more scripts. I am too tired of ducks to get excited." November 22, 1968, letter to Mike Barrier. "My 'Officer for a Day' was a signt-gag story with poor Donald playing the helplessness of a modern policeman to his best ability. The Beagle Boys, a motorcycle gang and a flying saucer all present unsolvable problems." January 15, 1969, letter to Mike Barrier.

134 - November 1970 - 36 pages

DONALD DUCK and The Lost Peg Leg Mine - 10 - **Reprinted** from DONALD DUCK No. 52, March-April 1957.

DONALD DUCK - 10 - **Reprinted** from WALT DISNEY'S COMICS No. 194, November 1956.

135 - January 1971 - 36 pages

DONALD DUCK Knight in Shining Armor - 10 - **Reprint** of "Donald Duck" from WALT DISNEY'S COMICS No. 198, March 1957

CHANGES: Title changed as noted.

GYRO GEARLOOSE and The Firefly Tracker - 4 - **Reprinted** from UNCLE SCROOGE No. 27, Sept.-Nov. 1959.

UNCLE SCROOGE and His Handy Andy - 4 - **Reprinted** from UNCLE SCROOGE No. 27, Sept.-Nov. 1959.

DONALD DUCK - 1 - **Reprinted** from the back cover of DONALD DUCK Four Color No. 422, Sept.-Oct. 1952.

138 - July 1971 - 36 pages

DONALD DUCK A Day in a Duck's Life - 13 - Donald's "muscle car" is infuriating his neighbors, and he has to pay for the damage it causes even before it leaves the driveway. Donald burglarizes the nephews' booby-trapped piggy bank so that he can have his tires retreaded. He horns in on the nephews' delivery business, then gets involved in a race with another hot-car driver and winds up inside a cargo plane when his brakes go out. A hijacker forces the plane to land and steals Donald's car, but the car is so powerful that the thief wrecks it and is pinned beneath it. Donald gets a reward, but it is just enough to repair his car and pay his debts. (Script only.)

CHANGES: Barks' script is fourteen pages long. It was compressed to thirteen pages in its published form by deleting one panel (it would have been the third panel on the fourth page of the published story, showing Donald lunging for the nephews' piggy bank and saying, "My speed career can be delayed no longer! I **need** this money!") and reducing the width of a number of panels that were to have been the width of the page.

BARKS: "I've just turned in a 14-page Donald script to Chase [Craig] It's about Donald building himself a hotrod car. The kids comment that he wastes his life in such useless projects. He'll never get ahead. The car takes everything Don can earn by a series of flukes of luck, proving the kids are right. It's about the poorest story I ever did, but, then, I'm burned out on D.D. ideas." February 20, 1970, letter to Mike Barrier.

C. UNCLE SCROOGE

40 - January 1963 - 36 pages

Front cover: Scrooge, as Santa Claus, carries a sack of money over his shoulder. (Art only.)

UNCLE SCROOGE Oddball Odyssey - 19 - Scrooge has received a strangely scented letter that purports to be from a descendant of Circe; the writer says that she will sell the treasure of Ulysses to Scrooge if he will bring his Old Number One dime to prove who he is, The nephews, who keep their distance from the letter, smell a plot by Magica de Spell, and save both Scrooge and Donald—and the dime—from her when the ducks get to the Italian island where Magica is waiting for them. Magica, in her rage, kicks in a wall, behind which she finds the ancient room where Circe performed her magic. With Circe's wand, she turns the nephews into pigs and Donald into a turtle. Scrooge yields up his dime, but Magica reneges on her bargain, and the ducks are saved only when they steal the wand from Magica and destroy it, an act that restores Donald and the nephews in their proper shapes.

GYRO GEARLOOSE Posthasty Postman - 4 - Gyro starts off on his first day as a postman by pausing between each delivery to invent something to make a postman's life easier, and eventually is fired for his slowness.

Back cover: Same illustration as on the front cover.

41 - March 1963 - 3 pages

UNCLE SCROOGE The Status Seeker - 20 - Scrooge becomes interested in acquiring the world's top status symbol, and when told that it is the Candy-Striped Ruby, remembers that he once traded it to the king of a South Seas island. He and the ducks head for the island in a submarine, followed by a status seeker named Porkman de Lardo, who has hired the Beagle Boys as the crew for his ship. Scrooge has brought along crates of peppermint candy that look like the ruby, so that he can conceal the ruby in the candy; the ducks also use the candy to free the submarine from the clutches of a huge, hungry jellyfish, and then to get the ruby back from the kind, who believes that the best status symbol is a big belly. De Lardo and the Beagles are not foiled by the candy ruse, and take the crates aboard. They taste each piece of candy as they search for the ruby, and then toss the candy overboard. The jellyfish tastes it and embraces De Lardo's ship. Scrooge forces De Lardo to return the ruby to him before he tells the status seeker that the jellyfish wants only the candy.

CROSS-REFERENCES: Both the ducks and the Beagles make obvious references to "All at Sea" in UNCLE SCROOGE No. 31, Sept.-Nov. 1960, in which Scrooge attempts a ruse similar to the candy-ruby switch, but with corn and gold.

GYRO GEARLOOSE Snow Duster - 4 - Gyro tries to melt the snow from Duckburg's football stadium with a crop-dusting plane and his new snow dissolver, but he crashes, and the job is done instead by Gyro's helper and a flock of snowbirds, carrying snow dissolver in nut shells.

42 - May 1963 - 36 pages

UNCLE SCROOGE - 1 (inside front cover) - Scrooge is challenged to a duel by a rival millionaire, and they fire their pistols at ropes holding sacks of money above one another's heads.

UNCLE SCROOGE The Case of the Sticky Money - 20 - Scrooge is surprised to see the Beagle Boys spending wildly. He then encounters Donald and the nephews, who are celebrating the nephews' invention of super-sticky glue Scrooge recognizes a bill he gets in change at a soda fountain as one from his bin, and he then leads an army of police and lawyers to the Beagles' plush new mansion—but he is baffled to find that the serial numbers on the bills are unfamiliar (the Beagles have changed the numbers). Scrooge, convinced that the Beagles must have trained bats to fly into his bin through

the ventilators, goes to the roof to stand guard, while the nephews lament their discovery that their glue is good only for sticking objects to people. The Beagles steal money from under Scrooge's nose by running a vacuum tube on treads up the side of the money bin and down a ventilator. But the next night, the ducks catch the hose in the act, and when the Beagles try to flee with the money they've stolen that night, it sticks to them—the nephews have coated it with their glue. By the time the ducks and the police arrive at the Beagles' mansion, the Beagles are a tangled mess, and must be hauled away in a big bundle.

UNCLE SCROOGE - 1 - A genie in a lamp appears to Scrooge, telling him that any desire will be granted, but Scrooge's demands are so extravagant that the genie quickly flees.

UNCLE SCROOGE - 1 - Donald glues a dime to the sidewalk to foil Scrooge, but Scrooge uses a jackhammer to drill up a piece of the sidewalk with the dime on it.

43 - July 1963 - 36 pages

Front cover: Scrooge, in a chef's hat, tosses a bowl full of money as if he were making a salad.

UNCLE SCROOGE For Old Dime's Sake - 18 - Magica de Spell hurls all sorts of wild weather at Scrooge's bin in her effort to get at his Old Number One dime, finally sending a comet and then a meteor crashing directly into the bin. Scrooge is ready for her, and the bin stands. The only damage is to Scrooge, when bottles of ink break on his head. When he cleans himself, he leaves one ink smudge on the back of his head as a "souvenir." Magica eludes Scrooge's spies, throwing him off guard, and after using magic to disguise herself as the mayor, she gets Scrooge off by himself and hypnotizes him into giving her the combination to his safe. She then disguises herself as Scrooge, but the nephews notice the absence of the smudge and attack. Scrooge himself, after recovering from the hypnotism, snatches the dime from Magica's hands and flees into the money bin with tiny comets nipping at his tail feathers.

44 - August 1963 - 36 pages

Front cover: Scrooge protests as a bird flies off with some of his paper money to use in feathering its nest. (Art only.)

UNCLE SCROOGE Crown of the Mayas - 21 - Scrooge, who is fuming because he has just been denied membership in the Archeologists' Club, takes the ducks with him on a flight over the Yucatan Peninsula. There, they sight some Mayan ruins whose discovery will get Scrooge into the Club. As they load up with supplies at an airfield in Mexico, their plans are overheard by two scoundrels who have just been thrown out of the Archeologists' Club and have come to Mexico in search of artifacts. The crooks follow the ducks to the ruins and trap them in a pool called the "Well of Sacrifice." The ducks escape through a subterranean tunnel and dress in Mayan robes, frightening the crooks so that they fall into the Well of Sacrifice themselves. The ducks toss life preservers to the crooks before leaving.

UNCLE SCROOGE The Invisible Intruder - 6 - A long introduction tells how the size of Scrooge's bed has increased as his fortune has grown. Then one night the bed quivers, as if someone were walking on it. Scrooge has to hire an expensive detective to learn that the quivering is being caused by machinery that is tamping down the money in his bin. He decides to junk his over-sized bed and return to sleeping in a dresser drawer. (Art only.)

REPRINTED: WALT DISNEY COMICS DIGEST No. 27, February 1971.

45 - October 1963 - 36 pages

Front cover: Scrooge and the nephews examine a nest of golden eggs as Donald herds two golden geese in the background. (Illustrating "Isle of Golden Geese.")

UNCLE SCROOGE Isle of Golden Geese - 23 - The ducks unearth an old sea chest containing a strange golden goose feather and a captain's log that recommends rubbing the head with goose eggs to "maketh the mind quick to see profits." Scrooge buys some goose eggs, and finds that one egg is a golden color, with gold dust suspended in the yolk. The eggs have come from Featherbrain Island, and the ducks prepare to go there—but Magica de Spell learns of their plans and blocks their way, then sails for the island herself with the Beagle Boys as her crew. The ducks beat Magica to the island, but she seizes their golden eggs and feathers, and is foiled only when the girl who owns all the geese on Featherbrain Island orders them to descend upon Magica's ship, immobilizing it.

REPRINTED: WALT DISNEY COMICS DIGEST No. 9, March 1969.

UNCLE SCROOGE The Travel Tightwad - 4 - Scrooge tries to save money by switching from a chauffeur-driven car to a chauffeur-driven motor scooter, but when that proves to be expensive, too, he returns to his car, this time trying to save money by washing his chauffeur's uniforms himself. (Art only.)

REPRINTED: WALT DISNEY COMICS DIGEST No. 33, February 1972.

46 - December 1963 - 36 pages

Front cover: A four-armed creature covered in metal and riding in a tiny flying saucer hooks Scrooge away as he reaches for his Old Number One dime, while Donald and the nephews watch. (Illustrating "Lost Beneath the Sea.")

UNCLE SCROOGE Lost Beneath the Sea - 22 - An ocean liner bearing Scrooge's Old Number One dime sinks in deep water, and Donald and Scrooge go after it in a bathysphere. They find that the ocean liner, and other ships as well, have been drug away. Donald, who is an over-eager newspaper reporter, wrecks the bathysphere when he tries to return it to the surface, and he and Scrooge appear doomed. But the bathysphere is dragged away to an undersea shipyard manned by Martians—four-armed creatures whose bodies are covered in metal. The Martians are salvaging the iron from the sunken ships for their own desperately iron-poor planet Scrooge wins his freedom and helps the Martians, too, by locating a huge deposit of iron ore. When Donald tells the editor of his newspaper about the Martians, the editor throws him out of a window.

GYRO GEARLOOSE A Helper's Helping Hand - 4 - Gyro, using a rocket belt and a portable paint sprayer, paints a huge bridge in record time—but when he's attacked by an angry sea gull, his helper has to finish the job.

UNCLE SCROOGE The Lemonade Fling - 5 - Scrooge has bankrolled the nephews' lemonade stand, and to make sure that they're honest, he disguises himself and watches how they handle their money. Because Donald is passing out some of Scrooge's money to potential customers, Scrooge has to keep drinking lemonade to hold his place at the stand, and is groggy from sixteen lemonades when he finally leaves.

REPRINTED: WALT DISNEY COMICS DIGEST No. 30, August 1971.

UNCLE SCROOGE - 1 (inside back cover) - When there is a fire at the business school, all the firemen carry pretty girls to safety in their arms—except for Scrooge, who carries the safe.

47 - February 1964 - 36 pages

Front cover: Scrooge tosses money away from a sack as Donald shines a ray on him from a small machine that resembles a camera. (Illustrating "The Thrifty Spendthrift.")

UNCLE SCROOGE The Thrifty Spendthrift - 20 - Donald has bought a hypnotic ray device from a scientist; when a slide of Donald is projected toward Scrooge by the ray, and Donald tells Scrooge to give him loads of Christmas presents, Scrooge will be overwhelmed with the urge to be generous. But the nephews, not knowing what the machine is, substitute a slide of a dog for the slide of Donald, and so Donald unwittingly

tells Scrooge to give the dog many presents. Scrooge, upon learning that the dog belongs to the Duchess of Duckshire, gives the dog all the presents listed in the song "The Twelve Days of Christmas"—much to Donald's consternation. The Duchess is so delighted that she gives Scrooge a deed to ten oil wells.

REPRINTED: UNCLE SCROOGE No. 96, December 1971.

GYRO GEARLOOSE Man versus Machine - 4 - Gyro, in a fit of revulsion over machines, flies off to the desert to live the simple life, but soon has to be rescued by two robots belonging to a "desert rat" who is himself an inventor who found the simple life too hard to handle.

UNCLE SCROOGE - 1/2 (top half of inside back cover) Scrooge burns a mass of candles to see if a light bulb really does provide light that is the equivalent of a hundred candles.

UNCLE SCROOGE - 1/2 (bottom half of inside back cover) - Scrooge has invented a divining stick that attracts gold like a magnet, and it pulls him up to a gold-bearing plane passing overhead.

48 - March 1964 - 36 pages

Front cover: As Magica de Spell grins in the background, Scrooge is astonished to see Donald's and the nephews' faces reflected as Magica's in a pond. (Illustrating "The Many Faces of Magica de Spell.")

UNCLE SCROOGE The Many Faces of Magica de Spell - 22 - Magica invents a potion that, when sprayed on a person's face, makes that face look like the face at which the person last looked. Learning of the potion, Scrooge escapes from Duckburg with his Old Number One dime and hides with the ducks in an unknown valley in the jungle, populated by a strange race of faceless people. A chain of messages from birds—starting and ending with Magica's pet raven—reveals Scrooge's hiding place, and Magica goes there and sprays his face. Scrooge gives her his Old Number One dime, but she reneges on her promise to provide him with an antidote. The nephews retrieve the dime and give Magica a squirt of her own potion. After learning from the Junior Woodchuck guidebook that soap and water is the antidote for the magic formula, the ducks leave Magica behind as she tries to brew an antidote of her own.

REPRINTED: WALT DISNEY COMICS DIGEST No. 34, April 1972.

GYRO GEARLOOSE Jonah Gyro - 4 - Gyro's use of a little mechanical fish to lure salmon irks some other fishermen, but when he tosses the fish away, it goes back into the sea, luring a school of salmon and a whale that swallows Gyro in its rush to get at the salmon. Gyro's helper saves the day by maneuvering the mechanical fish toward shore, so that the whale lands on the rocks and Gyro is freed.

49 - May 1964 - 36 pages

Front cover: As Donald pilots a small space ship toward the moon's surface, Scrooge—with a pick in his hand and a mad look in his eye—has to be restrained by the nephews from leaping off the nose of the ship. (Illustrating "The Loony Lunar Gold Rush.")

UNCLE SCROOGE The Loony Lunar Gold Rush - 17 - Scrooge is lecturing the Junior Woodchucks on the follies of gold fever when the first astronauts return from the moon with the news that gold is thick there. Everyone—including Scrooge and the Woodchucks' comnander—immediately goes batty. The ducks eventually build their own small rocket and go to the moon, where Scrooge sets up the rocket as a store selling eggs, flour, bacon and air—at gold rush prices. A villain named Dangerous Dan McShrew lures the ducks away from their rocket and leaves them to die. But Scrooge and Donald make their way to the rocket, and Scrooge confronts McShrew in a parody of Service's "The Shooting of Dan McGrew." McShrew is knocked unconscious when the recoil of his revolvers sends him crashing back against the shelves of the rocket store, and Scrooge flies home in a rocket heavy with the gold he has received in exchange for his trade goods.

50 - July 1964 - 36 pages

Front cover: The ducks are riding on a flying carpet which is being unraveled by a roc holding one of its threads in its mouth. (Illustrating "Rug Riders in the Sky.")

UNCLE SCROOGE Rug Riders in the Sky - 16 - Magica de Spell, in a bazaar in Baghdad, finds an authentic flying carpet, but instead of buying it herself, she tricks Scrooge—who is also shopping in the bazaar—into buying it, with the expectation that she will steal it from him later. Magica does steal the carpet twice, but each time the ducks regain possession of it, and the carpet finally bears them to a cave containing the treasure of Aladdin. Magica turns herself into a roc and pursues the ducks, grasping a thread from the rug and unraveling it—but she is robbed of her powers when the ducks hurl a magic stone from the treasure trove at her. As Scrooge flees across the desert while carrying his treasure, Magica can only hurl stones at him.

CHANGES: This story was originally seventeen pages long; one page was dropped before publication.

51 - August 1964 - 36 pages

Front cover: As the Beagle Boys stare after him, a worried-looking Scrooge runs while holding aloft a crate that contains a mixture of lettuce and paper money. (Illustrating "How Green Was My Lettuce.")

REPRINTED: UNCLE SCROOGE No. 95, October 1971.

UNCLE SCROOGE How Green Was My Lettuce - 15 - Gophers undermine the foundations of Scrooge's money bin, and so he has the coins exchanged for bills to decrease the bin's weight. The gophers belong to the Beagle Boys, who are planning to slide Scrooge's money bin down through a tunnel and into a pit under their own building. The nephews discover the Beagles' plans and Scrooge sends his money away attached to his trained pigeons. Scrooge and Donald disguise themselves as lettuce farmers and drive out of town in a truck filled with lettuce that conceals Scrooge's paper money. The Beagles steal the truck to feed the lettuce to their gophers, and the ducks follow them across the countryside, finally catching up with them at the site of Scrooge's money bin—before the Beagles ever realize that they have been driving around with Scrooge's fortune.

CHANGES: This story was originally seventeen pages long; two pages were dropped before publication.

REPRINTED: UNCLE SCROOGE No. 95, October 1971.

52 - September 1964 - 36 pages

Front cover: Scrooge and Donald, both holding wigs in their hands, look puzzled as they examine a huge wig that conceals the nephews entirely, except for their feet. (Illustrating "The Great Wig Mystery.")

REPRINTED: UNCLE SCROOGE No. 85, February 1970

UNCLE SCROOGE The Great Wig Mystery - 20 - Scrooge, who is bringing home a load of wigs from Europe, crashes his plane on landing, spilling wigs all over the field. A pig character named Scalpnick pretends to have been caught under the wigs when the plane landed, and sends Donald—the only witness to the crash—on a one-way trip as the pilot of a booby-trapped plane. A jury, convinced by Scalpnick's story that the crash gave him an allergy to wigs, gives him an award of nine hundred times more money than there is in the world. The ducks learn that Donald is still alive in a jungle village and fly to rescue him—but Scalpnick flies after them, attacking Scrooge's plane and tossing all of the ducks into a whirlpool after they have saved him from the same whirlpool. Scalpnick's plane crashes into the whirlpool as he leaves, and the ducks climb to safety on his plane's wings. Scalpnick is left to the tender mercies of the jungle witch doctor who treated Donald.

REPRINTED: UNCLE SCROOGE No. 85, February 1970.

To be concluded next issue.

LETTERS TO MIKE BARRIER

An Underground Colloquy

Denis Kitchen's "Confessions of an Underground Comics Publisher," about the operations of [illegible] Works, Inc., stirred [illegible] controversy when it appeared in FUNNYWORLD No. 13. It provoked comments from Roger Brand and Jay Lynch—both of whom are, like Kitchen, underground cartoonists—and a reply from Kitchen himself.

From ROGER BRAND: The Kitchen piece was really low. The Print Mint dishonest? Money-minded? (Krupp is not money-minded? They've turned down at least one really good book from San Francisco—BOGEYMAN No 4. edited by Rory Hayes, the best issue yet—saying in a letter that Rory hadn't proved himself to be a good seller yet.) I don't know what Jay Lynch's altercation with the Print Mint was all about, but I and several other cartoonists around here have had perfect dealings with the Print Mint. They went through a temporary financial crisis last year, but they warned us of it in advance (since it centered around income taxes, they were

able to see it coming) and have since paid us all and upped their rates. Rip Off Press has printed, so far, a much superior line of books to Krupp's, their printing (which isn't bad) notwithstanding. Since they do their own printing, it has been a matter of learning on the job, and their recent books have been beautifully printed, including one book with a sixteen-page four-color signature.

The point is that it's simply unethical to write an advertisement for oneself in the guise of an article, and slander the competition in the process. Slander or ignore; Kitchen implies that only three outfits exist, but in the San Francisco Bay area, there are also Gary Arlington's San Francisco Comic Book Company, John Bagley's Co. and Sons, Don Donahue's Apex Novelties, and Ron Turner's Last Gasp Eco-Funnies, and probably others, but these are the major ones.

Kitchen's circulation figures for National and Marvel are all wrong; most of the books print around three hundred fifty thousand copies and sell slightly over **half** that; a lot of books, it's true, but Kitchen doesn't mention that most "underground" titles eventually sell out.

Krupp carries no advertising? A fib—most of the Krupp books **do** carry a page of ads for their own stuff, and most books of other outfits do not. Krupp's audience wouldn't tolerate ads? Apparently Kitchen hasn't the same respect for FUNNYWORLD's audience; I hope you got paid, Mike.

Finally, Krupp is "quickening the demise" of "the outmoded social system we live in"? With that garbage? If it were true, present-day MAD would have brought about full-scale destruction of the system already. With a few exceptions (Jay Lynch and Skip Williamson and a few others) the Krupp line is scorned by most San Francisco cartoonists. One excellent San Francisco cartoonist referred to them, quite accurately, as the "Charlton line of underground comics," and pointed out that with every art or mass-media "wave," there is a body of pap that is not only accepted by a large part of the public but sometimes even preferred (like present-day MAD to Kurtzman's MAD), because it's accessible through being watered down.

DENIS KITCHEN replies: I do not know Roger Brand. I don't know what his motives are for attacking my piece in FUNNYWORLD No. 13. But his misleading and even vicious condemnation of Krupp forces me to counter him.

Roger takes issue with my reference to the Print Mint as "money-minded." He asks, "Krupp is not money-minded?" Of course we are, in the sense that we have to be concerned with keeping the business alive, paying the bills, etc. But my point was that the Print Mint was **primarily** interested in making money. Krupp is primarily interested in publishing quality books, distributing them efficiently, and paying the cartoonists fairly and promptly. My partners and I have not drawn a **cent** beyond our ordinary royalties as artists. We are truck drivers, shipping clerks, secretaries, and bookkeepers for Krupp

on an unpaid basis. In our dealings with other cartoonists we are scrupulously honest and considerate (as any who have ever worked with us will testify).

The paragraph on the Print Mint from which Roger excerpts the "money-minded" quote includes my observation that "Production was slow, payments to artists were slower, receipts of press runs were nonexistent, and communication was impossible." That sentence was carefully worded to describe the conditions that existed between the Print Mint and the Midwest cartoonists. I do not doubt, Roger, that your dealings with them were "perfect." You were able to put direct pressure on them every day. You did not have to make long-distance phone calls that invariably ended in runaround and doubletalk. It was lack of communication that led to the formation of a company in the Midwest, as the article clearly stated.

Roger's reference to Krupp's turning down BOGEYMAN No. 4 is laughable. We received Xerox copies of nineteen

of the fifty-two pages of BOGEYMAN No. 4. These pages were mostly by Kim Deitch, Spain Rodriguez, and S. Clay Wilson. But the bulk of the book (including work by Mendes, Fuller, Coen, and McMillan) was conspiculously absent, as were such key pages as the front cover (by Rory Hayes). On the basis of what was sent to us, Rory asked fourteen hundred dollars for the book. Of **course** we turned it down.

As far as Jay's altercation with the Print Mint goes, my reference to "legal action" is correct, as Jay's letter elsewhere in this issue should make clear. (Unfortunately, the Print Mint's financial sword forces Jay to ride the fence. Speak to him privately if you doubt.)

Roger's sudden mention of Rip Off's allegedly having a "much superior line of books" is totally irrelevant as a criticism of my article. I was careful to point out that it was **only** the Print Mint we ever had trouble with.

Roger accuses me of being "unethical" for writing an "advertisement" for myself in the "guise of an article," while "slandering the competition in the process," not to mention "ignoring" the other four outfits. Mike Barrier invited me to do an article on Krupp (then Kumquat) in June 1970. It was to have appeared in the same issue as an article on Rip Off Press by Bob Follett. I was **not** asked to survey the field of underground comic-book publishers. I only mentioned the Print Mint and Rip Off in the context of how they affected the formation of a comix company outside California. The four companies Roger mentions are simply irrelevant to the purpose of the article.

In regard to circulation and advertising, Roger misses the whole point. The article was intended for that bulk of FUNNYWORLD's readers who know nothing about "underground" publishing. My point was that the "straight" comic publishers have the distinct advantages of large press runs, which cut printing costs per book, and commercial advertising, which brings in revenue beyond that produced by the sales of books. Underground comic publishers have severe handicaps in economic terms because of small press runs and no advertising. Roger's remark that National may sell only half of a press run of three hundred fifty thousand in a month while an underground comic will eventually sell out a twenty thousand press run is pointless. A straight publisher gets an advance from his distributor based on previous sales figures, which guarantees that the printer, at least, is paid, as well as the staff, himself, etc. Underground publishers must sell half the press run through erratic channels just to meet basic costs.

Roger contends that my statement that Krupp, unlike straight publications, carries no advertising is a fib. Obviously, in my article, I was referring to **commercial** advertising (the kind that sells for money, Roger). The house ads on the inside back covers of our comix are a service to many readers who wish to obtain other titles. Many, if not most, readers do not have access to a shop that carries a full line of titles.

Then, finally, Roger condemns our line as "garbage . . . scorned by most San Francisco cartoonists" as "the Charlton line of underground comics." I think it is hardly necessary to answer this vile and undeserved charge. I confidently leave its reply to other readers.

If we met in person, Roger, and kicked the shit out of the air, we might end up buddies. Unfortunately, your delusions, reinforced by some San Francisco cronies, may continue, and a serious rift in the underground artist community could occur.

From JAY LYNCH: I oughta clarify one point brought up in Denis Kitchen's article. Although we at BIJOU were dissatisfied with the Print Mint's method of working with us on the distribution of BIJOU, I don't think their incompetence can be blamed on anything other than the fact that back in '68, when we had most of our dealings with them, they were just lousy businessmen. Although we were not paid for issues No. 2 and 3 right away by the Print Mint, we were paid eventually. We hired a lawyer to collect our payment for those two issues, but all the lawyer did was phone the Print Mint a few times from his office in Berkeley. The whole thing never actually reached the point of litigation. When the lawyer started phoning them, it gave them a whole new slant on the matter, I guess, and they started paying us right away.

The only reason I can figure out for the long delay in our first payment on those early issues is that in 1968 the Print Mint was making a transition from poster distribution to comix distribution. Back then, there were only four comic books: ZAP, FEDS 'N' HEADS, YELLOW DOG, and BIJOU. In order for the Print Mint to expand it was necessary for them to invest all comix profits in the production of new comix titles. Being bad businessmen, they did this, I assume, before they paid the artists for the comix they already had published—which was kind of a risky move on their part. However, comix **have** become quite successful, thanks to the Print Mint's going off the deep end and sticking their necks (as well as our necks) out financially.

Looking back on the whole thing, I would be extremely pissed off if comix had failed, and the Print Mint had invested **our** profits in it. However, comix have become tremendously successful, so I guess the ends hallow the means.

Since our original hassle with the Print Mint, the Print Mint has been paying us regularly for BIJOU No. 2, 3, and 4, which they still have exclusive distribution rights to. It seems that over the years they've learned quite a bit about business, too, so I really can't complain about financial arguments between BIJOU and the Print Mint in the past.

MIKE BARRIER comments: In his reply, Denis Kitchen mentions a piece on the Rip Off Press that was to have appeared in FUNNYWORLD No. 13 in conjunction with the article on Krupp. I first asked Bob Follett to write that article in the fall of 1969, and he agreed to do so. I still have not received the article.

Since Jay Lynch wrote the letter printed above, I have received another letter from him, in which he says that Krupp will be distributing all back issues of BIJOU in the future, including the three issues that the Print Mint has been distributing. "We decided to let Denis do 'em all," Jay wrote. "His outfit needs the dough more, and he is located in Milwaukee [Jay lives in Chicago], and much easier to deal with."

From ROBERT CRUMB (underground cartoonist): Harvey Pekar . . . what a crazy guy!!! The last of the working-class Jewish intellectuals . . . he's my good buddy, old Harvey . . . I stay with him whenever I'm in Cleveland and we have long debates about things and I learn a lot from him . . . he's a vast encyclopedia of historical knowledge and seems to have a really good perspective on the world, but he's better in person than in his writing.

FUNNYWORLD is such a serious journal . . . it should be called "Serious World" . . . all those serious analytical letters and articles about cartoons . . . **cartoons**, yet!! It really kills me! You guys . . . I dunno . . .

Right now, I'm workin' on BIG ASS COMICS No. 2 . . . more weird sex fantasies . . . you don't like the sex stuff of mine, do you? It's pretty weird, I admit . . . I dunno if I like it myself . . . well, I do, but in such a personal way that I always have serious doubts if such drawings should be printed for public consumption . . . then again, long as the' kids keep buyin' 'em, I'll keep drawin' 'em.

MIKE BARRIER replies: Of course FUNNYWORLD is serious; it deals mostly with comics and cartoons that are good, and that means the laughter they provoke is more liberating and healing than the cheap laughs produced by mediocre stuff. It's up to the comics and cartoons to be funny; it's up to me to explain not why they are funny (that's a hopeless job) but why they're funny in such a satisfying way. Seneca said, "Real joy is a serious business," and Peter Bogdanovich has said, "There's nothing frivolous about making people laugh"; they're both right. I may be funny in FUNNYWORLD, but it'll be when I'm writing about bad comics or cartoons, and I don't expect to devote much space to them.

From ROY THOMAS (Marvel comics editor and writer): My one real regret about FUNNYWORLD is that, when it comes to commercial comics, which are doing material aimed at a different interest than your own, you become as myopic as those "ignorant critics" whom you mention in the introduction to the Chuck Jones interview. Viewed later in perspective, I'm pretty firmly convinced that you'll be largely repudiated, but to say more would be to expostulate, and I'd rather type scripts instead. I've found that debates, however enjoyable and fanzine-filling, are usually pointless and non-convincing for all sides involved, and I tired of debate in high school.

One small, short-term correction: comics sales in the first half of 1971 have not "continued to decline," as you erroneously state; there seems, instead, to be some resurgence of sales, which always depended as much on distribution (which in turn depended largely on the value to newsdealers of dimes and nickels) as anything else. In fact, surveys taken seem to indicate that comics sales in total have remained almost exactly constant over the long haul for six or seven years; the relative loss (relative, that is, to population increase) seems due largely to the unwillingness of many stores to stock fifteen-cent items—hence the recent change to twenty-cent magazines.

I agree to a limited extent with your rather narrow view of the so-called relevant comics as resembling "middle-aged men in bellbottoms"; yet, as you more wisely state in the following paragraph, any comic is truly relevant if it is worth reading. So when a literate reader writes, as one did recently (with regards, as it happens, to a sequence in CONAN), that "such comics make their own relevance," I'll stack his opinion up alongside your own and rest relatively content, at least until the Comics Code is done away with and we are told (i.e., **allowed**) to aim at a more mature audience, or until underground cartoonists (and fanzine editors) prove they could work within the Code's limitations and still sell one hundred thousand or more copies of monthly magazines. (The fact that you and they don't **want** to do mass-circulation magazines, to my mind, is irrelevant; I'm saying most of you **couldn't** do it.)

From CHUCK JONES (animated-cartoon producer and director): I did not receive a copy of FUNNYWORLD No. 13, but Forest Lawn Memorial Park did, and on the basis of your article about my decline and fall, the undertakers there suggested that it was high time my measurements were taken. I was moribund, and didn't know it, and they wanted me to know that they buried husks as well as men.

I tried to convince them that I had at least one viable corpuscle left, but to no avail. I pointed out that "Horton Hears a Who" had been made **after** "The Phantom Tollbooth" and not before—and that I had directed it, not Ben Washam—didn't that make a differencd in my decline? Who, they answered, were they to believe—me or Mike Barrier? That stopped me; obviously, they had no choice.

They said that your review of "The Phantom Tollbooth" was the clincher as to my early demise. Before that they had read, they said, reviews in the Los Angeles TIMES by Cecil Smith and Charles Champlin, Judith Crist in NEW YORK, Stefan Kanfer in TIME, Richard Schickel in LIFE, others in the FREE PRESS, the Scripps-Howard newspapers, the DAILY BRUIN of UCLA, etc., etc., etc.—all laudatory, some very flattering. They said the awards to the film from UNESCO and the Southern California Film Council finally induced them to see "The Phantom Tollbooth." They said they and their children thoroughly enjoyed it—not until they read your review did they realize how bad it really was and how wrong all the other critics were, and that they indeed had a splendid customer mouldering away conveniently located and ready to pick up.

Forest Lawn and I thank you for your splendid remarks about my youth, and we thank you for listening to the clarinet-like pipings of my declining years.

MIKE BARRIER replies: I erred when I attributed direction of "Horton Hears a Who" to Ben Washam. Washam himself has said that when he took charge of the "Horton" project, he was given the complete soundtrack and the storyboards, which were in finished form. Working from the storyboards, Washam did the final layouts and the detailed timing of each scene, and supervised the animators. Chuck Jones retained the final authority, and directed some parts of the picture completely before giving it to Washam so that Jones could attend to another project. In other words, Washam was the director of "Horton" only in a narrow, technical sense, which means that the credits in the film—Jones as director, Washam as co-director—are accurate.

That doesn't alter the point of that part of the article, which was that Chuck Jones' pictures tend to be better the more involved in them he is. I thought that "Horton" was an exception to this, and that Washam had taken up the slack left by Jones' reduced role, but it turns out that "Horton" is evidence for my general proposition.

From JOHN CULHANE (author of a forthcoming history of American animation): FUNNYWORLD No. 13 was a feast! Your piece on Chuck Jones, "From 'Night Watchman' to 'Phantom Tollbooth'," had your usual passion for accuracy in the main body of type plus your talent for tracing the evolution of an artist through his work. How succintly you put things: "But Jones' first few Bugs Bunny cartoons are flabby; Bugs couldn't be digested into the early Jones style." Reminds me of Agee, when he was writing about Comedy's Greatest Era. (**Not** when he was writing about animation. I never could make heads nor tail of most of the comments he made on Disney; for example, on "Melody Time": "There seems to be an obvious connection between the Disney artists' increasing insipidity and their increasing talent for fright, but I will leave it to accredited sado-masochists to make the official discovery." What fright did he find in "Melody Time"? The storm in "Little Toot"?

Your review of "A Boy Named Charlie Brown," "The Phantom Tollbooth," and "The Aristocats" took me back to those dear dead days when Otis Ferguson of THE NEW REPUBLIC had not yet gone below for a cup of coffee in the torpedo-infested waters of the Pacific Theatre, and animated films still got the kind of careful consideration that live-action films get.

I think that much of the problem with animated films today is that they are made to be admired, whereas, formerly, they were made to make people laugh. The irony for me is that many of the movies I admire most I admire because of the way they made laugh—and the same is surely true of the public that loves Chaplin and Keaton and W. C. Fields. Harry Langdon said once that "the oddest thing about this whole funny business is that the public really wants to laugh, but it's the hardest thing to make them do it. They don't want to cry, yet they will cry at the slightest provocation. Maybe that's why so many comedians want to play tragedy—they

want a sort of vacation." Well, animation is not a medium that is well-suited to drawing tears—though it can be done, as Frank Thomas proved in the scene in which the Dwarfs cry around Snow White's bier. But it's a hell of a good medium for drawing laughter—and yet, I sat through the second morning's program at the Annecy animation festival with Friz Freleng, and he and I laughed out loud only once during ten films. That was during a Bulgarian grab-bag of sight gags called "The Three Sots," when the simpletons labor to build a bridge across a lake. The camera pulls back to reveal that the simpletons have built a horseshoe-shaped bridge that ends up back on their shore, only a few feet from where they started. It wouldn't have seemed like much of a gag in a Friz Freleng Bugs Bunny or Tweety Pie, nor did it build, but on that program it seemed hilarious. In Fellini's fine film, "The Clowns," somebody says, "The clown isn't dead. The world just doesn't know how to laugh any more." Instead, too many filmmakers say, "Admire my over-lying meanings." Great jumpin' horney toads!

From MAGGIE THOMPSON (co-editor, COMIC ART): A couple of comments on your three movie reviews:

"The story men have handled 'The Aristocats' clumsily, failing to find imaginative solutions (like the 'twilight bark' in 'Dalmatians') to plot problems." Well, maybe that's the difference between story men's writing and novelists' writing? I read ONE HUNDRED AND ONE DALMATIANS several years before the movie was released (and, I suspect, some time before Disney bought it)—when it was serialized in WOMAN'S DAY. And it had the twilight bark in it—and **most** of the character designs were the same—and so on. It was a well-constructed, enjoyable book.

"There is a virtual absence of French-accented voices, despite the French setting . . . " Well, shouldn't there be? Marlon Brando obviously worked for months on his German accent for "The Young Lions," and it was **beautiful**—except that he was supposed to be speaking German! He was, thereby, totally out of place in virtually all his scenes. There's no reason for a nationality accent unless a character is speaking a language foreign to him. In "The Aristocats," all characters are speaking their own language—French, in this case—and so would have only their own differences of speech to contend with.

●

One of the pleasant by-products of working on FUNNYWORLD is the correspondence I receive from people who worked in animation in its heyday, but have since lost contact with it—until reading FUNNYWORLD. One such person is Fred Niemann, who worked as a story man at the Schlesinger studio in the late Thirties, and has been out of animation since then. Fred Niemann is interested in hearing from his former colleagues, and letters to him can be addressed c/o FUNNYWORLD, Box 5229, Brady Station, Little Rock, Arkansas 72205.

ESTREN
(Continued from Page 20.)

UP FROM THE DEEP, unlike the Print Mint's offerings, is partly in color and partly in black and white. It starts with the advantage of containing stories by some of the very best artists and writers in the underground-comic field: Jaxon, R. (Gore) Corben, Kim Deitch, and Greg Irons. Irons' black and white contribution here far surpasses his color work in LIGHT, even at its best—a fact which confirms the intimidation of some underground cartoonists by the color medium. More to the point, the two color stories in UP FROM THE DEEP provide the first evidence in this medium of sensitive artists applying their perception to color itself.

Jaxon's story takes an easier way out than does Corben's, and as a result is less satisfying than the other Jaxon pieces in the same comic. But Jaxon's use of color to invoke the world of dreams, of nameless nighttime fears, is a logical one, and it is perhaps only because this is so logical a use of color that Jaxon's tale somehow lacks impact. But Corben's story is a different matter altogether, as this outstanding artist—a relatively new underground cartoonist, and already one of the very best—exploits color in an exciting narrative story, using it to enhance lighting, perspective, and mood. There is something especially menacing in a beast dimly drawn, merging with background color while the story's protagonists stand out clearly in different hues. There is something no less than astonishing in Corben's use of different **amounts** of color, or of different numbers of colors in the same panel, to convey different moods. True, there are times when Corben's change from one color to another seems merely capricious, but his story in UP FROM THE DEEP—which, taken as a whole, is one of the best underground comics ever released—is staggering, if only by contrast to the other cartoonists' color stories, for its realization of what a true artist can do with a new tool.

Since so much of the underground comics' strength lies precisely in their departure from traditional comic book formats and mores, on the one hand, and from the reality of the Great World Out There, on the other (compare anything by Crumb with a National comics portrayal of a super-hero), it seems logical to assume that the cartoonists as a group will soon discover the limits imposed by traditional usage of color, and will show as little respect for those limits as they have for other traditions. Until that not-too-distant time, it is worth keeping in mind some words written in 1916, when another highly-developed form—the black-and-white silent movie—was beginning to feel the technical impact of color. In THE FILM: A PSYCHOLOGICAL STUDY, the usually perceptive Hugo Munsterberg wrote, "We became aware that the unique task of the photoplay art can be fulfilled only by a far-reaching disregard of reality. The real human persons and the real landscapes must be left behind and, as we saw, must be transformed into pictorial suggestions only. We must be strongly conscious of their pictorial unreality in order that that wonderful play of our inner experiences may be realized on the screen. This consciousness of unreality must seriously suffer from the addition of color. We are once more brought too near to the world which really surrounds us with the richness of its colors, and the more we approach it the less we gain that inner freedom, that victory of the mind over nature, which remains the ideal of the photoplay. The colors are almost as detrimental as the voices."

On the most short-sighted level, the evidence of most early color underground comics might lead us to similar statements. Most artists are so far using color only to their own detriment, and the net effect of the early color efforts is generally less than the effect of the same efforts would have been in black and white—a fact which makes Corben's work in UP FROM THE DEEP all the more striking. But the vitality and special genius of the whole field of underground comics merit faith on the reader's part. Once past the collective group-grope of early experiments, it is more than likely that the underground cartoonists will come to see color as just another aspect of their medium, presenting special problems and posing special challenges. It's hard to believe they will bring less skill and vitality to those challenges than they have already brought to so many other aspects of the comic-book world.

END

IWERKS
(Continued from Page 37.)

Leagues Under the Sea." During World War II, he did a lot of drawing for the training films that comprised the main part of the company's product in the early 1940s. He designed many effects for such Disneyland attractions as "It's a Small World" and "Pirates of the Caribbean," and did the design for the film presentation for the "Hall of Presidents" attraction for Walt Disney World. In 1962, he put in more than three hundred hours on special effects for Alfred Hitchcock's feature, "The Birds."

In 1959, Ub received an Academy Award for the design of an improved optical printer for special effects and matte shots, and another in 1964 for work with Peter Vlahos and Wadsworth Pohl on the conception and perfection of techniques for color traveling matte composite cinematography. About the same time, he received the Herbert T. Kalmus Gold Medal Award for his outstanding technical contributions to the industry.

Ub married Mildred Sarah Henderson in 1926, and they had two sons, Donald and David, both of whom became members of the Disney Studio's technical staff. Ub was a collector of mechanical things. He was an avid firearms collector and a member of the Southern California Arms Collectors Association, and also collected early cameras and related paraphernalia, such as glass slides and stereopticons. He liked to bowl, and gained a measure of fame for bowling the first "300" game at a new alley on Lankershim Boulevard in the early 1940s. Professionally, he was a member of the Motion Picture Research Council, the American Society of Cinematographers, the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences (serving on a special committee on technical awards), and the Academy of Television Arts and Sciences. He was also a Fellow of the Society of Motion Picture and Television Engineers.

Ub Iwerks is frequently forgotten when the history of animation is recounted, even though he contributed so much to the industry. He was a quiet, unassuming person, always devoted to his work and disliking any interruptions. He was modest and did not seek publicity, even though audiences noticed his strange name when they saw it on the screen. Recently, there has been renewed interest in the contributions Ub Iwerks made to animation during his long career. The world is beginning to realize that Ub Iwerks, a man who never even finished high school, was a genius in his own right.

END

FRITZ
(Continued from Page 19.)

"Robert's real trouble is that he has never learned to say no to anybody," Marty Pahls says, and Crumb himself admits as much. Last summer, Krantz sent Crumb a thousand dollars as an advance on a second Krantz-Bakshi feature; at that point, it was to have been "Head Comix," a rock fantasia with Mister Natural as master of ceremonies. "I wrote them a letter telling them not to use any more of my characters in their films," Crumb says. "I can do that in a letter, but when I'm face to face with somebody, and like they're a person, I have to be mister nice guy or something."

Steve Krantz says that Crumb didn't write a letter, but only returned the check; still, the substance of the gesture was the same. Despite this sample of Crumb's firmness, Ralph Bakshi remembers Crumb as "mister nice guy," and professes to be mystified by Crumb's hostility to "Fritz." "With Robert," he says, "I guess you don't know what he's thinking. He's a shy guy, and I guess he's telling you things because he doesn't want to hurt your feelings. In his head, he's got a whole other world going."

Some of Bakshi's other comments are more revealing: "I'm sure that at some points I was asking very hard to do it when I first met him in New York—that's okay . . . Yes, I was enthusiastic about Crumb, and yes, I would have climbed five walls to have 'Fritz' done in animation."

What emerges most strongly when Bakshi talks about his meetings with Crumb is Bakshi's own strong desire to make the picture, and his efforts to impress that desire upon Crumb. Crumb's reluctance was an obstacle to be overcome, and Bakshi evidently thought that he had overcome it. Instead, he had simply run over it. That's not to say that he intimidated Crumb; there is no suggestion of that in what either man says. At worst, Bakshi failed—in his understandable eagerness to make the picture—to take Crumb's own feelings about the project into account. It may not even have been possible for Bakshi to do that. Steve Krantz says that Crumb's attitude changed "from day to day," and Bakshi remembers that Crumb "said yes and no I guess a million times." Introverts like Crumb always retreat into themselves most hastily when confronted by overpowering extroverts, and Bakshi—with his intensity, his thick Brooklyn accent and his strong physical presence—probably seemed to Crumb to fit into that category. There may have been no way for Bakshi to have reached that "whole other world" inside Crumb's head.

What we have, finally, is not the cynical, ruthless exploitation that so easily could have been involved in the production of "Fritz," but rather two artists whose radically different personalities all but guaranteed that confusion would follow in the wake of their conversations. At bottom, the "exploitation" of Robert Crumb may be simply a matter of a cartoonist who was reluctant to say "no" and an animator who was eager to hear "yes."

In the second part of this article, to be published in FUNNYWORLD No. 15, Mike Barrier describes how work on "Fritz" proceeded in New York and Hollywood, and discusses "Fritz" itself and Ralph Bakshi's methods as a director in greater detail.

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